

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of September on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Tamaqua Municipal Building, 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA.

Present were Councilmembers Ronald Bowman, Brian Connely, R. Daniel Evans, Micah Gursky and David Mace. Absent were Councilmembers Thomas Cara and Kerry Lasky. Officials present were Mayor Christian Morrison, Chief of Police Richard Weaver, Acting Borough Manager Robert Jones, Solicitor Michael S. Greek and Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer Amy Macalush.

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

The reading of the minutes of the last Regular Council Meeting held on August 16, 2016 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 Jean Ann Towle, chair of the Tamaqua Spirit of Christmas Committee, stating that the annual Santa Claus Parade is planned for December 2, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. The parade will assemble at the Borough Garage on East Broad Street and travel west on Broad Street to Depot Square Park where Mr. & Mrs. Claus Santa will turn on the lights. The sleigh will then proceed to the Tamaqua Community Arts Center on Pine Street where they will greet the children. The communication requested police and fire police assistance during the parade. A recommendation was made to grant the request, and to authorize the use of the Tamaqua Fire Police. 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 unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Steven Gintz of 123 Pine Street, expressing an interest in serving on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). It was noted that there are five members on the Citizens Advisory Committee and that there are no vacancies; however Director of Community Development Mary Linkevich stated that Harry Snyder verbally submitted his resignation from the committee and that the Citizens Advisory Committee recommended that council approve Mr. Gintz' request to join the committee. Council recommended that Ms. Linkevich request a letter of resignation from Mr. Snyder and that the request be put on hold until the next meeting.

Communication was received from the Officers of Citizens Fire Co. #1 requesting permission to close Hegarty Avenue on September 17, 2016, for their annual Pig Roast. 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 Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Acting Borough Manager Jones reported on the following: an ad was placed for the sale of various used equipment and that all bids would be opened and read on September 15th at 2:00 p.m; the 2016 – 2017 insurance renewal applications for MRM, Public Officials/Employment Practices Liability, Pollution and Police Liability were submitted, and that the renewal application for workers compensation was still under review; that he and Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia DeWire will be attending a meeting with Benecon on October 7, 2016 to review the Pennsylvania Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative (PMHIC) insurance renewal; and while reviewing

insurance policy renewals, it was recommended by Seltzer Insurance Company that the Borough request a Certificate of Insurance from event sponsors of parades, tournaments, festivals, etc., naming the Borough as additional insured.

Director of Community Development Mary Linkevich reported on the following: the handicapped pool lift was approved but further clarification is needed as far as the stairs; she will be attending the Understanding the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program training course in Harrisburg from September 7 – 9, 2016; the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met and recommended that council approve Steven Gintz' request to join the committee, and that a certificate of appreciation will be sent to Harry Snyder for his many years of service on the CAC; social media is going well; grant research is going well; and that she will be meeting with some of the committees to come up with a list of potential projects.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to send Mary Linkevich to the Understanding the CDBG Program training course in Harrisburg, PA from September 7-9, 2016, at a cost of approximately \$230.00. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, Chairman Gursky stated that the committee recently met with Acting Borough Manager Rob Jones, Borough Secretary/Treasurer DeWire and Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer Macalush to discuss the 2017 budget. Chairman Gursky commended the staff on behalf of the committee for pitching in and for doing a great job with 2017 budget preparations.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to refund The New Life Assembly of God Church the \$50.00 rental fee for the Bungalow Pavilion. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Evans, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to purchase street crossing pushbuttons from Signal Control Products, LLC for \$2,945.00 plus freight. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Evans, seconded by Gursky, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to extend a No Parking Zone to the rear of 227 Penn Street to the western edge of 225 Race Street. It was noted that the existing no parking sign at 225 Race Street will just be moved. Councilman Connely suggested that the homeowner be notified of this. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Evans, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, President Mace stated that ten new parking meters were ordered.

Under the Streetlights Committee report, President Mace stated that a committee was formed for the streetlights project that consists of himself, Councilman Evans and Councilman Gursky.

Under the Streetlights Committee report, Councilman Evans provided an update on the streetlight project as follows:

The borough is grandfathered in to move forward with the PPL streetlight acquisition and LED (light-emitting diode) upgrade project; an initial non-refundable deposit of \$47,800 for engineering services, inspection and identification of system and field inventory is required by October 31, 2016; the engineering study will take approximately three months at which time a make ready work list would be provided; there are 483 streetlights in the borough; the total estimated cost for the purchase of the lights is \$348,809; the payback for purchasing the lights and converting to LED is estimated at 8 ½ to 9 years; converting to LED lighting would cut energy consumption and distribution charges in half; major savings would be realized by switching from the current SHS tariff for the high pressure sodium lights to the SE tariff for the LED lighting; project financing options are being explored; and the project would be completed by late 2017 or early 2018. There was much discussion about this matter including: total cost of the project; annual cost savings to the borough; the engineering study and make ready work; borough make ready work to be completed concurrently with PPL work; borough responsibility of light replacement; lights located in PPL safety zones; funding options; obtaining financing through USDA or ESCOs; using new revolving funds if considered an eligible expense; and requests for proposals for a line of credit with other financial institutions.

A recommendation was made to send out requests for proposals to local financial institutions regarding potential financing for a streetlight project. 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 Evans, and unanimously approved.

Councilman Evans thanked Council for their help and support in moving the project along.

President Mace thanked Councilman Evans for spearheading the streetlight project and thanked Mary Linkevich for attending the recent webinar on street lighting and for her financing research efforts.

Mayor Morrison stated that residents in the South Ward have expressed their concerns with parking issues on South Street and on Hunter Street, and that it is difficult to drive through. Mayor Morrison asked that the Parking and Traffic Committee look into the issue.

Mayor Morrison also stated that he and Borough Secretary/Treasurer DeWire received correspondence from Blackford Ventures LLC regarding the unfunded liability of the police pension and a new state aid pool program to help pay off the unfunded pension. Mayor Morrison stated that there will be informational meetings held in Wilkes Barre in September. Mayor Morrison stated that the letter was shared with Ron Bittner, who thought it was an interesting idea and suggested that Mayor Morrison and/or someone else from the Borough attend one of the meetings if possible.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Tom Schlorf of 223 Orwigsburg Street asked about the hole on the 200 block of South Street and stated that it looks like it is caving in. Acting Borough Manager Jones stated that he would look into it. Mr. Schlorf also asked for an update on the motion to advertise an ordinance for No Parking Tow Away Zone on Oak Street.

Mark Bower of 213 Spruce Street stated that he thought the ordinance for No Parking Tow Away Zone on Oak Street would be addressed at this meeting. Solicitor Greek stated that he prepared the ordinance and it would be adopted at the next meeting on September 20th.

Councilman Bowman asked if Oak Street can temporarily be posted for no parking on Friday nights for a home football game. Mayor Morrison approved and will work with Acting Borough Manager Jones on this matter.

John Sienkiewicz of 215 Bove Street requested that the white line painted on Hunter Street by a resident be removed as it is off center and a safety issue.

Robbie Cadwallader of 21 West Spruce Street expressed her concerns about the community and about the shooting incident that took place earlier in the day. Ms. Cadwallader stated that she moved to Tamaqua from the Philadelphia area to escape violence, adding that she came here with multiple gunshot wounds and suffers from seizures as a result. Ms. Cadwallader also expressed her concerns about the drug problems and about the rental properties near her home, stating that most of the landlords do not live in the area and do not care about the property, and more limitations should be put on the landlords to help deter problem tenants. There was some discussion about these matters.

Tom Schlorf asked if a landlord can be fined if police are called several times to the same property. Solicitor Greek stated that he has written ordinances to that effect in some municipalities.

Michelle Mehallic of 411 North Lehigh Street commended the police for their response to the shooting incident that took place earlier in the day. Ms. Mehallic stated that she warned police about the drug issues on Cherry Street for years and that something needs to be done soon. Ms. Mehallic stated that more full-time, not part-time, police officers are desperately needed in the borough.

Mayor Morrison stated that the borough has enlisted the help of the Civil Service Commission to begin the hiring process for full-time police.

Jackie Chaney of 631 Hazle Street expressed her concerns about the drug activity in the community and stated that she feels it is more important to hire police officers than to purchase streetlights. Ms. Chaney also stated that heroin is being dealt right behind Turkey Hill, right across from the police station.

Michelle Mehallic asked Chief Weaver if the elementary kids were already in school at the time of the shooting incident. Chief Weaver stated that the kids had just been picked up and were on their way to school.

Robbie Cadwallader expressed concern about cars flying up and down Spruce Street and stated that traffic flow was much better when the temporary stop signs were placed there.

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

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 Gursky, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 8:35 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 9:35 p.m.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Evans, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer