

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of September on Tuesday, September 21, 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 Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese.

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

President Mace announced that executive sessions were held on August 31, 2021 and September 8, 2021 to discuss personnel matters.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on August 17, 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 Christine Zizelmann, president, stating that she is resigning her position from the Board of Health effective immediately. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Christine Zizelmann from the Board of Health 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 Connely, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Michael Weaver stating that he is resigning his position as a full-time Police Officer from the Borough of Tamaqua Police Department. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Michael Weaver as a full-time Police Officer from the Borough of Tamaqua Police Department. 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 John Comisac stating that he is retiring as Water Distribution Worker/Meter Reader for the Borough of Tamaqua. He stated that his last physical day of work will be August 31, 2021 at which time he will be using his accumulated paid time off and his last day of employment will be on or around August 4, 2022. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of John Comisac as Water Distribution Worker/Meter Reader for the Borough of Tamaqua. 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 Albert L. Gricoski, Director of the Schuylkill County Election Bureau, stating that in preparation for the upcoming Municipal General Election on November 2, 2021, the bureau is reaching out to the polling locations to ensure the availability of the facilities. If the facility is still available, there is no need to contact their office. President Mace stated that no action was required.

Communication was received from Paul Dodson, stating that Tamaqua Area Faith Fellowship Network (TAFFN) and the Tamaqua Area Community Partnership (TACP) are requesting permission to hold an in-person "Hunger Walk" at 2:00 p.m. on October 31, 2021. The purpose of the walk is to help the food banks at the Primitive Methodist Church and Trinity United Church of Christ. The route would begin at the Tamaqua Community Art Center, walk south on Pine Street to Broad Street, cross Broad Street and walk east to Federal Street, cross Broad Street and walk west back to Pine Street, turn north and continue back to the Art Center. The communication also requested the assistance of the Tamaqua Fire Police for this event. A recommendation was made to grant the requests, 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 Bowman, seconded by Connely and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Carol L. Bennage of 244 Van Gelder Street stating that several years ago council approved off street parking on the south side of Van Gelder Street at 244 Van Gelder and back then there were not as many cars as there are today. Ms. Bennage is requesting that council consider approving two "No Parking Between Signs" for the north side at 247 Van Gelder to be able to pull in and out without any issues. A recommendation was made to refer the matter to the Parking and Traffic Committee. Chairperson Linkhorst of the Parking and Traffic Committee stated that he looked into this situation a little bit. 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 Secretary/Treasurer Georgia DeWire informing borough council that the 2022 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the Police Employees Pension Plan is \$289,153, the MMO for the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan is \$161,375, and the MMO for the Non-Uniformed Defined Contribution Component Plan is \$28,000. Secretary/Treasurer DeWire stated that the borough would require state aid and/or borough contributions in the year 2022 to meet the funding requirements for any or all pension plan(s). Secretary/Treasurer DeWire stated that if General Municipal Pension System State Aid monies were not available, the borough contributions in the year 2022 to meet the funding requirements for all pension plans would be approximately \$478,528.

A recommendation was made to approve the certification for the Police Employees Pension Plan calculating the 2022 MMO as \$289,153, the certification for the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan calculating the 2022 MMO as \$161,375 and the certification of the Non-Uniformed Defined Contribution Component Plan as \$28,000. Councilman Connely stated that the borough has always funded the MMOs. 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 Aimee Dotson, office and outreach administrator, stating that the Tamaqua Area Chamber of Commerce has created a virtual walking map of the downtown to assist people, businesses, families, entire organizations and tourists to look up places to eat, shop, worship, work and play for those who move into an unfamiliar area. Ms. Dotson stated that the Chamber website and this map is where they will look. A sample sign was present

to council. Ms. Dotson stated that the Tamaqua Area Chamber of Commerce is requesting the signs be placed around town by utilizing existing poles and fixtures such as the historical marker signs, no parking signs or light posts. They would have a few placed in the downtown area as well as Depot Square Park and the Train Station area. A recommendation was made to refer the matter to the Parking and Traffic Committee. 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 David J. Meredith, parade chairperson/Post Adjutant 0173 for the Tamaqua American Legion C.H. Berry Post Number 173, requesting permission to hold the annual Tamaqua Veterans Day Parade on November 6, 2021 beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Broad Street. The event will be coordinated with Chief of Police Hobbs and the Tamaqua Fire Police. The Mayor and Councilmembers are also invited to participate in the parade. 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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the 2021-2022 insurance policy renewal with The Seltzer Group. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he does not have the pricing yet and the policy renews on October 1, 2021. A recommendation was made to refer the insurance policy renewal to the Borough Manager to review and execute. 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 PennDOT Center Street Project has been completed; the Schuylkill County Demolition Program project at 307 East Broad Street has been completed and the same contractor will be back in October to begin the demolition of 252 Cottage Avenue; the Lincoln Street Retaining Wall Project; and the storm on September 13th caused some damage to various borough facilities and a claim would be submitted to the borough's insurance company. President Mace commended borough workers on a coordinated and quick response. Manger Steigerwalt also commended the Tamaqua Fire Department.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he would be working on the annual Heating Oil Contract and the budget.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on changes to Sunshine Act amending the advertising and posting requirements and the way we prepare our meeting agendas. Solicitor Odorizzi discussed the changes as follows: the changes are not significant in terms of changing the way we have always posted the agenda in the past; that is, the meeting agendas must be posted at least 24 hours prior to a meeting at the borough hall, on the borough website, and available to members of the public in attendance; the really significant change for our council is that council will be limited to taking action only on the items on the posted agenda, except in limited circumstances of emergency business matters, matters that only arose within the last 24 hours prior to the meeting, matters that arise during the meeting itself, and in those instances council must amend the agenda by majority vote to amend the agenda to include such item, in order to take action on it, and must then post an amended agenda the next business day.

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

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported that she had a resolution approving the budget for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for fiscal year 2021 to present for Council's consideration. President Mace presented the details of the budget as follows: demolition \$31,226.00; recreation-South Ward Playground \$29,681.00; recreation-North/Middle Ward Playground \$43,182.00; and administration; \$22,848.00; and the total amount of the grant is \$126,937.00. The resolution approving the budget for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for fiscal year 2021 was presented for Council's consideration.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-12
APPROVING BUDGET FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021.**

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.

Director of Community Development Calabrese also reported that she would be attending a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) hearing in Pottsville on September 29th at 1:30 p.m.

Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese also reported on the Christmas decoration restoration project.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to prepare and advertise an ordinance prohibiting parking on the east side of Patterson Street across from 32 Patterson 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 507 North Railroad 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 Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to allow Reading, Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad to use Spruce and Lehigh streets as a detour route when they repair the West Broad Street railroad crossing. There was some discussion about the following: the approximate amount of time needed for repairs; the detour route and heavy traffic; the damage may not be seen today but in the future; Spruce and Lehigh streets were fixed; these streets are currently posted as No Truck Traffic; document the streets to be used as the detour route to the best of our ability; and the sidewalk to be placed at the Spruce Street railroad crossing. 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 Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a chimney that is separating from the dwelling and to install a metal vent and siding at 343 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 change existing sign face with no size change with additional product signage in the front windows at 249 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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to open a vape and convenience store with vinyl signs in the front windows two-foot by four-foot at 36 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.

Chairwoman Linkevich of the Recreation and Youth Committee reported that she had a resolution approving a revised Intergovernmental Agreement of Cooperation with the Eastern Schuylkill Recreation Commission to present for council's consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-13
EASTERN SCHUYLKILL RECREATION COMMISSION
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT OF COOPERATION

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing resolution. Councilwoman Linkevich stated that the Borough of Middleport and the Tamaqua YMCA were removed as participants from the Intergovernmental Agreement of Cooperation. The term of the agreement was also changed to a five-year agreement instead of a three-year agreement. 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.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to amend the agenda to include a motion to hire Stephen Biscardi as a part-time Police Officer, to fill an immediate opening. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion to amend the agenda, as well as the recommendation to hire Mr. Biscardi were so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to amend the agenda to include a motion to hire Christopher Cordes as a full-time Police Officer, to fill an immediate opening. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion to amend the agenda, as well as the recommendation to hire Mr. Cordes were so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to amend the agenda to include a motion to advertise and conduct a Civil Service Examination for the position of full-time Police Officer. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion to amend the agenda, as well as the recommendation to make such advertisement were so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Stephen Biscardi as a part-time Police Officer. Councilman Bowman stated that Officer Biscardi comes very well recommended. 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.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Christopher Cordes as a full-time Police Officer. Council recognized Kathy Kunkel, secretary of the Tamaqua Civil Service Commission, who stated that Officer Cordes comes highly recommended. There was no one else 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.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, Officer Christopher Cordes was sworn in by Mayor Gerace.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to advertise and conduct a Civil Service Examination for the position of full-time Police Officer. 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 Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Chairman Connely of the Public Safety Committee asked Chief Hobbs and Mayor Gerace to compile a list of part-time hourly rates from municipalities.

President Mace reminded councilmembers to respond to emails from Ms. Zamudio asking for items to be placed on the council meeting agenda.

Mayor Gerace expressed his concerns about maintenance issues around the borough and something needs to be addressed now. There was some discussion about this matter.

Mayor Gerace stated that he was contacted by two residents regarding the condition of the American Flag in front of the Municipal Building. Councilman Connely stated that he will bring new flags tomorrow.

Mayor Gerace announced that Trick or Treat will be held on Saturday, October 30th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Halloween parade would be held on October 26th with a rain date of October 27th.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

South Ward and First Assistant Fire Chief Mark Bower stated that the fire department provided shelter for some people who had been attending the Tamaqua High School football game when the storm passed through on September 13th. The fire station became a base of operations for emergency services for the next 24 hours as it operated with emergency power. Fire Chief Bower thanked borough workers, the fire companies, the police department and the fire police for working together. There was some discussion about this matter.

James Metsopulos, chief executive officer of Start Fresh Realty c/o JPM Holdings LLC of Phillipsburg, NJ, introduced himself to councilmembers. Mr. Metsopulos stated that he is purchasing properties in the area and intends to gut and repair rental properties. He can be contacted if anyone has any questions and distributed his business card. There was some discussion with Mr. Metsopulos.

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 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 with the exception of voucher numbers 44331 and 44430 withholding partial payment to Waste Management. 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 and legal 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 8:01p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:46 p.m.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:47 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer