

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of March on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 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, Brian Connely, Jay Hollenbach Jr., Kathy Kunkel, Mary Linkevich and Ritchie Linkhorst. Council member Ronald Bowman was excused. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Michael Hobbs, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Public Works Director Jay Stidham, Solicitor Anthony Odorizzi and Borough Secretary/Treasurer Trainee Timothy M. Ziegler.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Connely. The invocation was given by Councilwoman Linkevich followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Amentler. The roll was called with six council members present and one excused.

President Connely reported that there was an executive session held at 6:30 p.m. before the meeting to discuss personnel and legal matters.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on February 20, 2024 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from David Meredith of American Legion Post 173 requesting permission to hold the annual Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 27, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. 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 Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Carl Yaccino resigning from his position as a Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator effective March 8, 2024. 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Linda Heigle of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 200 Pine Street, requesting permission to hold a food truck event on Saturday, May 18, 2024 from 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Josh Holmberg of the Tamaqua Area Baseball Association requesting permission to utilize Clark Street and Willing Street to hold the opening day ceremonies and a parade to celebrate 75 years of Little League Baseball in Tamaqua and requesting Tamaqua Fire Police assistance for approximately 30-60 minutes. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Timothy M. Stahl resigning from the Tamaqua Planning Commission effective immediately. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Lee Calkins of the South Ward Playground Association requesting to have Oak Street between Race and Penn streets closed for the annual Easter Egg Hunt on March 23, 2024 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the following: Manager Steigerwalt had a conversation with the engineer and county grant manager regarding advertising for bids for the North and Middle Ward and South Ward playground projects. Bids will be due Wednesday April 24, 2024, and can be submitted via PennBid. There will be an optional pre-bid meeting held at the North and Middle Ward Playground on Tuesday April 16, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Update on street resurfacing project: Benesch engineering will start working on the street resurfacing projects in the 2022 Community Development Block Grant application. The streets are Cedar Street and Clay Street from Nescopeck to Pitt streets. The borough has street resurfacing projects in the 2023 CDBG grant; however, we may not see approval on those until fall of this year. Update on the demolition project at 423 Willing Street: The project has been completed. There may be a pause in demolition projects until we receive additional funds from a CDBG grant. Update on pool applications: The pool pass applications are now available for Tamaqua residents and for Lansford residents. Applications can be picked up at the Tamaqua or Lansford borough offices. Update on fee schedule resolution: Code enforcement officers would like to make changes to the fees. Manager Steigerwalt will work with the finance committee on updating the fees.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a motion was made to send Sergeant Thomas Rodgers to a Glock Armorer Course in Nazareth, PA on June 11, 2024 at a cost of \$250.00 and to a Modular Optic System Instructor Workshop in Walnutport, PA on June 12-14 at a cost of \$500.00. 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.

A motion was made to send Patrolman Christopher Cordes to a Technology for Law Enforcement training in Harrisburg, PA on April 10, 2024 at no cost. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on the motion of Linkhorst, seconded by Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 322 Mahanoy Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a motion was made by Hollenbach to issue three Certificate of Appropriateness to the following: Jacob Maluda for new signage at 15 East Broad Street, Marian Cancel for new signage at 301 West Broad Street, and Greg Smith at 1 Market Street for the construction of a carport. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a motion was made to hire Alex Parambo as assistant pool manager for the 2024 season at a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour. There

was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Under the Railroad Committee report, a motion was made to advertise an ordinance vacating Vine Street from North Railroad Street to 31.5 feet west of the railroad tracks. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage & Salary Committee report, a motion was made to amend the agenda to advertise for applications for a part-time utility clerk for the borough. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on the motion of Kunkel, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Nathan Grace gave an update on the amount of traffic citations issued in January and February, noting an increase of 35%. Mayor Gerace also noted an increase in parking tickets from January to February with an overall increase of 18%. Meter tickets in January were lower, due to the SafetyStick devices being implemented. There were 7,141 dispatches during 2023, which does not take into consideration traffic stops, phone calls, walk-ins, criminal arrests, warnings, and reports filed, noting that it makes for one of the busiest departments in the county. Mayor Gerace also gave a breakdown of the process for a criminal arrest in addition to explaining other processes within the police department and timelines for investigations. Mayor Gerace praised the police department for all they do for the community.

The meeting was opened to the floor:

Candace Rettig of 167 Orwigsburg Street stated that she cares for her handicapped grandson, and she has concerns regarding the height of the curb in front of her home and no method of egress on that side of the street in case of emergency. There was some conversation regarding the possible reasons for the height of the curb and possible resolutions such as a curb cut which would be the responsibility of the property owner. This will be turned over to the Parking and Traffic Committee to review possible solutions.

Tom Williams of 232 West Spruce Street had some questions for the mayor regarding police and policy enforcement and the total amount of parking citations and criminal arrests. Mr. Williams also expressed concerns about the department's focus on parking citations vs spending more time on criminal activity in the community and expressed that he would like to see more criminal arrests being made. In addition, he would like to see police enforcement on foot near the South Ward Playground due to a lot of fights and other activity going on after school hours. Mr. Williams also asked about the legality of the SafetySticks which are now being used in the community. There was some discussion on the legality of the devices and the reasoning as to where they are placed.

Solicitor Odorizzi asked council to consider making an amendment to the agenda to appoint Dave Mace to the CRIZ Authority.

A motion was made to amend the agenda to include the appointment of Dave Mace to the CRIZ Authority. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on the motion of Kunkel, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

A motion was made to appoint Dave Mace to the CRIZ Authority. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Linkhorst, 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 Kunkel, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

A recommendation was made to pay all properly approved bills and claims against the borough with Councilman Hollenbach abstaining from vouchers 5023, 5026, 50223 and 50224. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m. on motion of Kunkel, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Timothy M. Ziegler, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Trainee