

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of August on Tuesday, August 20, 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, Ronald Bowman, Brian Connely, Jay Hollenbach Jr., Kathy Kunkel, Mary Linkevich, and Ritchie Linkhorst. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Michael Hobbs, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Public Works Director Jay Stidham, Solicitor Anthony Odorizzi, and Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer Amy Macalush.

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

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on July 16, 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 Edith Moyer announcing her intention to retire as Secretary to the Police Department on or around January 17, 2025. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Edith Moyer. 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 Alexandra Perez of Pine Street inquiring about the installation of an "Autistic Child" sign on the corner of East Union Street and Pine Street. The matter was referred to the Parking and Traffic Committee.

Communication was received from Kristy Schmick, Secretary of the Tamaqua American Legion Auxiliary requesting the parking lot and adjoining streets be closed for their 1st Annual Poker Run to be held on September 7, 2024, with a rain date of September 8, 2024. 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 Eric Nelson announcing his resignation as Water Distribution Worker with the Tamaqua Water Authority effective Friday, August 16, 2024. Mr. Nelson requested that his employment be extended into September with use of his accrued comp time. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Eric Nelson effective Friday, August 16, 2024. It was noted that any accrued time off would be paid according to the UAW Collective Bargaining Agreement. 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 Brian Keich, president of the Tamaqua Lions Club, stating that the Annual Tamaqua Halloween Parade is scheduled for October 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m., with a rain date of October 23, 2024. The parade will assemble on East Broad Street, in the vicinity of Kistler Transportation, and proceed west on Broad Street and continue to the former St. Jerome's Church. The communication requested permission to prohibit parking along the parade route and assistance from the Tamaqua Police Department and the Fire Police. The communication also requested that East End Avenue be made one-way going west from Laurel to

Columbia streets so that traffic is going in one direction for drop off of the Tamaqua Band and Soccer teams at the M&M Storage Lot. A recommendation was made to grant the requests. 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 Paul Dodson of the Tamaqua Area Faith Fellowship Network (TAFNN) requesting permission to hold their Annual Hunger Walk on Sunday, October 7, 2024 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The route would begin at the Tamaqua Community Art Center, proceed to Griffiths Funeral Home and return to the Art Center. The Tamaqua Fire Police would be asked to assist. 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 Linkevich and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Michael Hromyak Jr., Tamaqua Athletic Director, requesting use of the Tamaqua Fire Police for all home varsity football games. 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 Linkevich and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Jess Umbenhauer, Chief Program Officer, Helping Harvest Fresh Food Bank, requesting permission to use the area surrounding the Dutch Hill Park for their Tamaqua Mobile Market beginning in October 2024. The communication requested use of the space one day per month for no more than 4 hours. 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 Linkevich and unanimously approved.

President Connely announced that an executive session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel and real estate matters.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on a partial structure collapse that occurred earlier in the day at 248-250 Mauch Chunk Street. There was some discussion about the matter and deeming it as an emergency demolition. A recommendation was made to authorize the emergency demolition of the property at 248-250 Mauch Chunk 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.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution approving the budget for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for fiscal year 2024. The details of the budget are as follows: street improvements, \$71,723.00; demolition, \$30,738.00; administration, \$22,491.00; and the total amount of the grant is \$124,952.00. The resolution approving the budget for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for fiscal year 2024 was presented for Council's consideration.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-6
APPROVING BUDGET FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024**

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 Hollenbach, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the following: paving on Cedar and Clay streets is scheduled to begin the week of September 9th or September 16th; the project at the North and Middle Ward and South Ward playgrounds is set to start on September 9th; the fencing for the park project had to be rebid; proposals for professional pool consulting services for the Bungalow pool reconstruction are due September 12th; the pool closed for the season on Sunday, August 18th; paving work on Reilly Avenue, Market, Coal and High Streets is ongoing; and bids for renovations for the wastewater treatment plant upgrades are due on Friday, August 23rd.

Under the Borough Manager’s report, Public Works Director Stidham reported on the sale of equipment results. A recommendation was made to award the sale of equipment via Municibid as follows:

2005 Dodge Ram 1500	Frank Kovalchick	\$575.00
2014 Ford Police Interceptor	Robert Church	\$3900.00
2016 Ford Explorer	Jeffrey Leone	\$9400.00

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 Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a proposal from C & V Construction in the amount of \$1,770.00 for repairs to the Fire Training Area. 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to place Slow Children Playing signs on East Union Street near the intersection with Pine 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve the 2025-2028 Police Department Collective Bargaining Agreement. 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Maria Derr as a full-time Police Clerk at a pay rate of \$18.29 effective September 9, 2024. Mayor Gerace asked if the clerk position was advertised. Councilman Bowman stated that it is not a union position and does not need to be advertised. 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Brian Clouser as a full-time Street Maintenance Worker at a pay rate of \$25.90 effective September 9, 2024. 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to post for in-house applications for a Water Distribution Worker position. 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace reported that National Night Out held on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 was a success and thanked all of those involved. Mayor Gerace asked for an update on streetlight replacements. Public Works Director Stidham stated that the streetlight replacement project was put on hold temporarily to do paving work and other projects. Mayor Gerace also asked about the possibility of a new ordinance addressing rental properties and slumlords. There was some discussion on this matter.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Paul Fegley of 628 East Broad Street expressed his concerns about his neighbor breeding dogs, dog kennels lined up along the side of the house, dogs barking all night and excess garbage. Mr. Fegley stated that he submitted two complaints about the matter. Manager Steigerwalt will follow up with Code Enforcement.

Michelle Calkins of 411 North Lehigh Street asked Council for an update on the handicapped swing set for the South Ward Playground. Councilman Bowman said the Playground Association first must decide on the type of swing they are looking for as there are different ones to choose from, and then determine if they can come up with the funds as the Borough would not be able to assist with the purchase.

Crystal Leary of 650 East Broad Street expressed her concern about her neighbor's dogs, roach infestations at neighboring properties, and landlords not treating infestations properly.

Mike Dinapoli of 650 East Broad Street expressed his concerns on the high percentage of rental properties in town, slumlords, dumpsters, the need to follow up on cleanup orders issued by code enforcement and there should be a committee formed to address ongoing issues with slumlords and rental properties. There was some discussion on these matters.

Gail Jones of 344 Lafayette Street expressed her concerns about a commercial truck with trailer parked around the neighborhood taking up several parking spaces. Chief Hobbs stated he is aware of the situation and will look further into the matter.

Palma Groshko of 112 North Lehigh Street expressed her concerns about a neighboring property, stating that there is an issue with rats, groundhogs and overgrown grass and weeds. Ms. Groshko was advised to file a complaint with the borough's code enforcement department.

Dave Clemson of 226 Pitt Street expressed his concerns about a chain link fence in the alley between Gay and Pitt Street that is rotted at the bottom, and garbage and rubbish at 121-123 Pitt Street (the former Anna Kaufman's Corner Store) and at 116 Pitt Street (formerly Schmauch's Market). Public Works Director Stidham will handle the matters.

Maria Derr of Spruce Street thanked Borough Council for giving her the opportunity to work with the Tamaqua Police Department.

With no one else 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 Kunkel, seconded by Bowman 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:52 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer