

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of December on Tuesday, January 16, 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, Kathy Kunkel, Mary Linkevich and Ritchie Linkhorst. Absent was Council President Brian Connely. 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. Councilman Jay Hollenbach Jr. was excused.

The meeting was called to order 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.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on January 2, 2024 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 Timothy M Ziegler, Borough Secretary/Treasurer, requesting council make a motion to open an escrow account for fire insurance proceeds received for the property at 208 Biddle Street in accordance with the Tamaqua Fire Escrow Ordinance No. 568. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Boman, seconded by Linkevich, to open the fire loss escrow account and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the following: the COSTARS Energy Procurement Program; the Penn State Facilities Engineering Institute (PSFEI) works in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of General Services Bureau of Procurement (DGS-BOP) on an energy procurement program; the borough is currently enrolled in the program and is set to expire at the end this year; and Penn State is asking if the borough would like to participate in their next Request for Quote (RFQ) that will be going out this spring. A recommendation was made to authorize the Borough Manager to potentially continue with the energy cooperative program offered by Penn State. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Boman, seconded by Linkhorst to continue with the program and unanimously approved. Manager Steigerwalt also reported that the Street Department will also be picking up Christmas trees and taking down the Christmas decorations over the next week. President Brian Connely also noted to ask residents who live near fire hydrants and drainage areas. Manager Steigerwalt also asked for residents to keep watch for no parking signs during snowstorms in case of snow removal.

Chief of Police Michael Hobbs noted that the safety sticks have been put up and activated and any violations that began in January will start being billed. President Brian Connely asked that a report be given to council monthly to see how the safety sticks are working.

Under the Finance, Wage & Salary Committee Report, a recommendation was made to approve fee agreements from Bowe & Odorizzi Law LLC for legal services. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Boman, seconded by Amentler and unanimously approved.

A motion was made to hire Lori Patrick as a full-time Utility Billing Clerk at the pay rate of \$18.29 effective January 8, 2024. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Boman, seconded by Kunkel and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to Norky Torres at 320-322 West Broad Street to replace existing windows that are broken with the same size windows as the original openings. 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.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to Alliance for Building Communities (ABC) at 401 Hazle Street to replace wooden steps at the rear of the building with new metal steps. 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.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to American Hose Company at 37 Mauch Chunk Street to demolish the 1980's white brick garage attached to the fire house. 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.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to Freddy Santamaria at 31 Center St Street to put a new double-sided sign on the existing mounted sign pole and arm for a new business. 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.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to Antonio Pereda Garzon at 116 E Broad St to attach new vinyl signs to both sides of the existing sign box mounted on the storefront for a new thrift shop. 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.

Under Railroad Committee a motion was made to authorize the borough solicitor to prepare and advertise an ordinance to vacate Vine St from North Railroad Street to 15 feet west of the railroad tracks. There was some discussion about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, seconded by Kunkle, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Nathan Grace reported the police did different scenarios and a walk through of the schools over Christmas break on December 27 2023 along with school administrators.

The meeting was opened to the floor with no one wishing to address council. 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 Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Under Unfinished Business, councilman Robert Amentler asked if a letter could be sent to Dale Freudenberg to start getting information out about Summerfest 2024. The matter was recommended to the parking and traffic committee. Solicitor Robert Amentler also brought up junk cars sitting on 500 block of Arlington St. It was forwarded to code enforcement to investigate this matter.

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.

Under New Business Public Works director Jay Stidham stated the new pick-up truck arrived and is being used with no issues, also new streetlights have been received and he will work on getting those replaced. Also, it was noted that residents near LCCC had issues with water coming off of LCCC's parking lot. LCCC has been contacted and their engineer doesn't want a curb there because water will lay on that side of their parking lot, but they do have a contractor scheduled to come in the Spring to scrape the bank down. President Brian Connely explained that our borough website needs some website modifications. It was recommended that councilwoman Mary Linkevich take ownership of this and get a committee together to go over anything that needs to be updated.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:16 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Kunkel, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Timothy M Ziegler, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Trainee