

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of November on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 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 Linkhorst. The roll was called with six council members present and one absent.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on October 17, 2023 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Bowman, seconded by Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Dan Evans, Chairman of the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) Authority, recommending the reappointment of Phil Houm to a five-year term on the CRIZ Authority effective January 1, 2024. A recommendation was made to reappoint Phil Houm to a five-year term on the CRIZ Authority effective January 1, 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.

Communication was received from John Comisac secretary of the Tamaqua Water Authority, recommending the reappointment of Phil Houm to a five-year term on the Tamaqua Water Authority effective January 1, 2024. A recommendation was made to reappoint Phil Houm to a five-year term on the Tamaqua Water Authority effective January 1, 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 John Comisac, secretary of the Tamaqua Borough Authority, recommending the reappointment of Phil Houm to a five-year term on the Tamaqua Borough Authority effective January 1, 2024. A recommendation was made to reappoint Phil Houm to a five-year term on the Tamaqua Borough Authority effective January 1, 2022. 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 Tom Nelson, Code Enforcement Officer of the Tamaqua Borough, recommending the reappointment of Bill Harleman to a three-year term on the Historic Architectural Review Commission effective January 1, 2024. A recommendation was made to reappoint Bill Harleman to a three-year term effective January 1, 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 Tom Nelson, Code Enforcement Officer of the Tamaqua Borough, recommending the reappointment of Dale Freudenberger to a three-year term on the Historic Architectural Review Commission effective January 1, 2024. A recommendation was

made to reappoint Dale Freudenberger to a three-year term effective January 1, 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 James Connely, Zoning Officer of the Tamaqua Borough, recommending the reappointment of Dan Evans to a four-year term on the Tamaqua Planning Commission effective January 1, 2024. A recommendation was made to reappoint Dan Evans to a three-year term effective January 1, 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 Judy A. Hoppes, festival Co-chairperson, stating that the Tamaqua Spirit of Christmas Festival Committee has been meeting and are planning to hold the 2023 Festival from November 30 through December 3. Events are being planned with safety and social distancing taken into consideration. There will not be a Santa Parade this year. The communication is requesting permission to use Depot Square Park on December 3rd for the Light the Park and “Meet and Greet with Santa” events and on December 1 for a Christmas Tree Lighting event. The communication also requested assistance of the fire police for the “Meet and Greet with Santa” event. 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 Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Megan Gimbel owner of Gimbel’s Restaurant, LLC requesting to continue to use outside seating at the restaurant formerly known as the wheel. of. 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. 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 Sienkiewicz, President of Safer Streets for Tamaqua’s little feet requesting permission to use Tamaqua’s Depot square Christmas tree for The Giving Tree project with the even kicking off on December 8, 2023 at 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the following: Public Works Director Jay Stidham issued a press release stating that the borough has stopped its weekly street sweeper cleaning; Borough Manager also reported a bid opening for Street Material Supply will be due on December 14, 2023. Bids will be opened at 2:00 pm; Manager Steigerwalt also stated there would not be Garbage pick up on Thursday 23, 2023 due to the Thanksgiving holiday and the revised schedule has been posted on the Borough website as well as the Borough Facebook page.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the Schuylkill County Community Demolition Program where as the Borough requested funds for the demolition of 423 Willing St in the amount of \$63,327.00. The demolition is being funded in part by Community Development Block Grant funds which are administered by Schuylkill County on behalf of the borough. A recommendation

was made to approve the Schuylkill County Demolition Program Agreement for the demolition of 423 Willing 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 the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) has offered to perform a Road Safety Audit on Spruce Street between Center and Lehigh streets. The audit was requested by the Tamaqua Area Community Partnership to improve pedestrian safety. A recommendation was made to approve the NEPA Road Safety Audit. 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to advertise for a full-time building custodian at a pay rate of \$19.57 per hour. 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to tentatively adopt and advertise the 2024 Budget. 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 motion was made to prepare a resolution setting the 2024 real estate tax rate at 23.75 mills with 22.40 mills for General Purposes, 1 mill for the Building and Equipment Fund, 0.25 mill for the Wabash Capital Improvement Fund and 0.10 mill for the Street Light Fund. 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, President Connely asked to increase the boroughs annual contributions to the four fire companies and the Tamaqua Rescue Squad by \$1,000 and an additional \$100 to the Tamaqua Fire Police as well as \$1,500 more to the Tamaqua Public Library. President Connely stated there would be no impact to the budget. Mayor Nathan Gerace also asked for an additional \$1,700 for the Seniors group to help with expenses until the new borough community center is completed. Manager Kevin Steigerwalt said he would add the contributions to the budget.

Under Neighborhoods, Downtown & Historic District Committee Report, a recommendation was made to approve certificates of appropriateness to replace the existing sign at 41 W Broad St, formerly known as Sherry Dental. The new business owner will replace the existing signs with new signs bearing their name. This includes a double-sided sign hanging from the bracket and the signs mounted inside the window. 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 Neighborhoods, Downtown & Historic District Committee Report, a recommendation was made regarding renovations to the fire damaged building at 117 W. Broad St. The plans include repair for the rear of the building and west side of the building only, including the fire escape replacement, side windows and a new gate between the buildings at the

front of the building. 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. It was noted plans for the front façade and any replacement of windows were tabled by HARC.

Under Neighborhoods, Downtown & Historic District Committee Report, a recommendation was made to approve certificates of appropriateness to replace the existing roof at the Tamaqua Save our Station located at 18 N. Railroad St. 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.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-12  
BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA  
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Borough of Tamaqua of Schuylkill County hereby request a Statewide Local Share Assessment grant in the amount of \$85,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the restoration and improvement of historic properties in the Tamaqua National Historic District.

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 to adopt the resolution was so ordered on motion of Link approved in a roll call vote 5-1 with President Connley abstaining from the vote.

Mayor Gerace thanked the Tamaqua Fire Police for their \$1,000 donation towards supplies for the police department.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

George Haldeman of 24 Van Gelder St expressed concerns about educating the community about having proper fire insurance on buildings due to the high number of buildings that remain dilapidated throughout the main streets of town. Mr. Haldeman asked if there could possibly be some type of educational training offered for building owners.

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 Bowman, seconded by Kunkel, 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.

Under Unfinished Business, President Brian Connely stated the importance of the Tamaqua Borough being chosen by the Veterans Day national Committee and how appreciative the Tamaqua Borough was to receive the certificate.

Under Unfinished Business, Public Works Director Jay Stidham stated the 3<sup>rd</sup> order of Street lights have been completed and the 4<sup>th</sup> order will be completed once the Borough receives them. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:48 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Timothy M Ziegler, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Trainee