

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of September on Tuesday, September 19, 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, 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 led by Councilman Hollenbach. The roll was called with all councilmembers present.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on August 15, 2023 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.

President Connely announced that due to the large audience and in respect for people's time, the meeting would begin with public comment.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Nicholas Boyle of 223 West Broad Street expressed his concern regarding a property at 227 West Broad Street that is ready to collapse and poses a threat to neighbors and pedestrians. Mr. Boyle asked Council if an emergency demolition can be ordered to prevent damage to his property located next door. Council Connely stated that Council can issue an emergency demolition for a portion of a property for safety reasons.

Zachary Penick of Z.I.P. Handyman & Renovations stated that he is the contractor for the property at 227 West Broad Street, and asked if the property could be removed from the Tamaqua Historic District to help alleviate issues with renovations due to the rules and guidelines. Councilman Connely stated that the Tamaqua Zoning Board could remove the property from the Tamaqua Historic District and that Borough Council can only issue an emergency demolition for a portion of the building. After some discussion, a recommendation was made to issue an emergency demolition for a portion of a building at 227 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 Bowman, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Kathy Nunemacher of 222 Mahanoy Street expressed concern with excess water running down from Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) and onto her property. Ms. Nunemacher also expressed concern about the potholes on High Street. Councilman Bowman commented that a portion of the Borough's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money is allocated for paving and suggested that LCCC be contacted regarding a remedy for the water runoff. Public Works Director Jay Stidham will look into the matter.

Alaina Wehmeier of 309 West Rowe Street expressed concern with poor lighting at the Swatara Street parking lot and asked if additional lighting could be installed. There was some discussion regarding installation of a new light pole, the cost of installing a new light pole, mounting a light on a building, and a steel pole with a solar light. Public Works Director Jay Stidham will research options and report to Council with recommendations.

Ray Pfeil of 315 West Rowe Street expressed his concern regarding parking at the Swatara Street parking lot. Mr. Pfeil stated that cars are being parked in from and people dropping off and picking up kids from the school bus stop, and asked if the lot can be marked at the entrance and exit openings.

Rev. Robert Tomes of New Life Assembly Church expressed concern regarding the ongoing raw sewage smell near the church. Rev. Tomes stated borough staff have been using detergent to help alleviate the smell, which helps but doesn't last long. Public Works Director Jay Stidham said the smell is likely due to the combination of rainwater and sewage system (CSO) and recommended continued use of the detergent. President Connely suggested discussing the issue with the borough's engineers for further insight into the matter.

With no one else wishing to address council, the meeting was closed to the floor.

Communication was received from Secretary/Treasurer Tonia Sakusky informing borough council that the 2024 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the Police Employees Pension Plan is \$272,089, the MMO for the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan is \$151,819, and the MMO for the Non-Uniformed Defined Contribution Component Plan is \$45,000.

Secretary/Treasurer Sakusky stated that the borough would require state aid and/or borough contributions in the year 2024 to meet the funding requirements for any or all pension plan(s). Secretary/Treasurer Sakusky stated that if General Municipal Pension System State Aid monies were not available, the borough contributions in the year 2024 to meet the funding requirements for all pension plans would be approximately \$468,908.

A recommendation was made to approve the certification for the Police Employees Pension Plan calculating the 2024 MMO as \$272,089, the certification for the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan calculating the 2024 MMO as \$151,819 and the certification of the Non-Uniformed Defined Contribution Component Plan as \$45,000. 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 Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Chad Snyder of 214 West Rowe Street asking if sharrows can be installed in town for cyclists. Councilwoman Kunkel stated that she did some research on sharrows and found that an engineering study is needed and that sharrows are generally used on roads with low traffic.

Communication was received from Brian Keich, president of the Tamaqua Lions Club, stating that the Annual Tamaqua Halloween Parade is planned for October 24, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., with a rain date of October 25, 2023. The communication requested permission to prohibit parking along the parade route and assistance from the Tamaqua Police Department and the Fire Police. 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 also requested that East End Avenue be made a 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, 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 David Hadesty, President Tamaqua Fire Police Association, requesting Council's assistance with filing a LSA grant for the Tamaqua Fire Police Association to purchase a piece of property and erect a building to hold meetings and house their equipment. The communication requested Borough Council to provide a resolution duly adopted formally requesting the grant on their behalf.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-10**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF**  
**TAMAQUA, COUNTY OF SCHUYLKILL, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,**  
**AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR A LOCAL SHARE**  
**ACCOUNT GRANT FOR TAMAQUA FIRE POLICE FACILITIES.**

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.

Communication was received from Kira Steber, Secretary/Treasurer Summit Hill Borough, requesting a letter of support from Council for a grant application that the Summit Hill Historical Society and Summit Hill Borough are applying for through the Department of Community and Economic Development's Local Shares Account, for the purpose of developing a unique visitor's attraction. A recommendation was made to provide a letter of support for the grant application. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution approving the budget for the CDBG Program for fiscal year 2023 to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-09**  
**APPROVING BUDGET FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT**  
**PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023**

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 Kunkel, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the 2023-2024 insurance policy renewal with The Seltzer Group. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he did not receive the renewal pricing yet and the policy renews on October 1, 2023. A recommendation was made to refer the insurance policy renewal to the Borough Manager and Finance, Wage and Salary Committee 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 reported that he had a proposal for professional engineering services from Alfred Benesch and Company for the annual inspection of Upper Owl Creek and Lower Owl Creek Dams at a cost of \$4,800.00 to present for council's consideration. A recommendation was made to approve a proposal from Alfred Benesch and Company for the annual inspection of Upper Owl Creek and Lower Owl Creek Dams at a cost of \$4,800.00. 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had an agreement between the Borough of Coaldale and the Borough of Tamaqua for the use of a Crack Sealer owned by Coaldale to seal cracks on streets within Tamaqua to present for council's consideration. A recommendation was made to approve the agreement between the Borough of Coaldale and the Borough of Tamaqua for the use of a Crack Sealer owned by Coaldale to seal cracks on streets within 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the following: the four demolition projects (Washington Street, Clay Street, Race Street and Penn Street) are complete; demolition of 423 Willing street started yesterday; the 309/209 paving project is almost complete; the Elks fundraiser scheduled for October 7, 2023 was cancelled and the street will not be closed; and the bid results for the new heating oil contract will be presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> council meeting in October.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to promote Patrolman Karl Harig to the rank of Corporal, 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, Mayor Gerace read a proclamation recognizing Karl Harig as a Corporal with the Borough of Tamaqua Police Department. Corporal Harig's son Nicholas placed pins on his lapel.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for three new signs at 246 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for new signage at 105 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace announced that Trick or Treat for Tamaqua residents will be on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss legal and personnel 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 Kunkel, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 7:46 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:11 p.m.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:11 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Kunkel, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer