

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its second Regular Council Meeting for the month of September on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Tamaqua Municipal Building, 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA.

Present were Councilmembers Ronald Bowman, Thomas Cara, Brian Connely, R. Daniel Evans, Micah Gursky, Kerry Lasky and David Mace. Officials present were Mayor Christian Morrison, Chief of Police Richard Weaver, Acting Borough Manager Robert Jones, Solicitor Michael S. Greek and Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire.

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. The invocation was given by Councilman Cara followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Evans. The roll was called with all councilmembers present.

The reading of the minutes of the last Regular Council Meeting held on September 6, 2016 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Connely, seconded by Gursky, and unanimously approved.

President Mace acknowledged Donald Serfass for his art work that is displayed in the Council Chambers.

Communication was received from Secretary/Treasurer Georgia DeWire informing borough council that the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the Police Employees Pension Plan is \$275,112, the MMO for the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan is \$77,842, and the MMO for the Non-Uniformed Defined Contribution Component Plan is \$24,000. Secretary/Treasurer DeWire stated that the borough would require state aid and/or borough contributions in the year 2017 to meet the funding requirements for any or all pension plan(s). Secretary/Treasurer DeWire stated that if General Municipal Pension System State Aid monies were not available, the borough contributions in the year 2017 to meet the funding requirements for all pension plans would be approximately \$376,954. A recommendation was made to approve the certification for the Police Employees Pension Plan calculating the 2017 MMO as \$275,112, to approve the certification for the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan calculating the 2017 MMO as \$77,842, and to approve the certification of the Non-Uniformed Defined Contribution Component Plan as \$24,000. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Gursky, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Brian Connely, chairman of the Tamaqua Borough Authority, stating that the Authority is requesting a sewer rate increase to the level needed to implement the necessary improvements to the Waste Water Treatment Plant and sewer collection system. Mr. Connely stated that the sewer system is owned by the Authority but operated by the Borough under a lease-back arrangement and sewer rates are set by Borough Council. The Authority is asking Borough Council to consider implementing a two-step sewer rate increase from \$65 per Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) per quarter to \$85 per EDU per quarter effective January 2017 and from \$85 EDU per quarter to \$105 per EDU per quarter effective January 2018. Alternatively, a single sewer rate increase from \$65 EDU per quarter to \$105 per EDU per quarter could be made effective January 2017. Councilman Connely discussed the needed improvements, financing, increasing the rates, and that the borough has one of the lowest sewer rates in the state. There was some discussion about this matter. A motion was made by Gursky and seconded by Cara to have Solicitor Greek prepare an ordinance for the proposed sewer rate increase for 2017. Council recognized Tom Schlorf of 223 Orwigsburg Street who asked about the Rush Township sewer costs

and charges to residents. After some discussion, the motion and second were amended as follows: A recommendation was made to have Solicitor Greek prepare an ordinance for the proposed sewer rate increases for 2017 and 2018. Council recognized George Haldeman of 247 Van Gelder Street who asked if there is a plan going forward for improvements. There was some discussion about this matter. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Cara, and unanimously approved.

It was noted that the wastewater treatment plant is currently compliant with all state regulations.

Acting Borough Manager Jones reported that he, Secretary/Treasurer DeWire and Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Macalush met with Mike Bulino of the Seltzer Group to review the workers compensation insurance. Acting Borough Manager Jones reported on the following: a recommendation to move the borough employees to the Municipal Risk Management (MRM) plan; a recommendation to move the firefighters to the State Workers Insurance Fund (SWIF); the firefighter premium would increase approximately \$1,000; the borough premium would decrease approximately \$17,000; dividends for the borough workers would be recognized in the future under the MRM plan; the experience modifier would be based on claims for the firefighters versus both; and the firefighters cancer presumption is a reason for the shift to MRM for the borough workers. There was some discussion about this matter. A recommendation was made to move the workers compensation insurance for borough employees to MRM and to move the firefighters to SWIF. Council recognized Assistant Fire Chief Mark Bower who asked if the coverage would be the same. Acting Borough Manager Jones stated that the coverage and the process would be the same. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Evans, and unanimously approved.

Acting Borough Manager Jones also reported that the quotes for the personal and property liability insurance policy should be completed in the next few days and premiums are expected to be the same as 2015-2016 and that the policy renews on October 1, 2016. A recommendation was made to refer the insurance policy renewal to the Acting Borough Manager and the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee to review and execute. There was some discussion about this matter. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

Acting Borough Manager Jones also reported that the bid opening for the heating oil contract will take place on October 3, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

Acting Borough Manager Jones also reported that a bid opening was held on September 15, 2016 for the sale of used equipment and council has the results of the bids. A recommendation was made to reject all bids and to rebid the sale of the equipment. It was noted that the bids were too low. 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 Connely, and unanimously approved. There was some discussion about the following: setting minimum bids for the equipment; the paver is approximately four to five tons and the scrap iron price is approximately \$3 to \$4 per 100 pounds; to look at scrap prices; asked Acting Borough Manager Jones to give suggested minimum bids for the equipment to the Building and Equipment Committee; asked Acting Borough Manager Jones to drop the minimum bid on the 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee and to

consider removing the tires and rims to be sold separately; Solicitor Greek cautioned on using a scrap value amount; the number of times the equipment could be rebid; and listing the equipment on the Municibid auction website.

Acting Borough Manager Jones also reported that Mr. Moseley has moved out of the property at 15 South Lehigh Street and the borough can proceed with advertising for demolition bids for the properties at 13 South Lehigh and 15 South Lehigh Street contingent upon Historical Architectural Review Commission (HARC) approval. A recommendation was made to advertise for the demolition of properties at 13 South Lehigh Street and 15 South Lehigh Street contingent upon HARC approval. Council recognized Tom Schlorf who asked if money has been allocated for the demolition. President Mace stated that funds designated from the New Revolving Fund would be used for the demolition. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

Acting Borough Manager Jones gave an update on the Family Dollar store sidewalk issue as follows: a PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit was returned for revisions last Friday and resubmitted yesterday; Mr. Hutchinson has a contractor ready to go; and that the work should be completed before winter.

Acting Borough Manager Jones also reported that there are deficiencies in the sidewalk/driveway in the area of Burger King which is adjacent to the Family Dollar. Burger King was also cited, has been cooperative and will be replacing the sidewalk/driveway.

Director of Community Development Mary Linkevich discussed proposed revisions to the guidelines for the Tamaqua Rehabilitation Loan Program for council's consideration. The revised guidelines had been distributed to council. The updated guidelines included: changing the contact person; reducing the total loan amount for individuals from \$20,000 to \$10,000 to help improve payback; removing the do-it-yourself option; the changes have been reviewed and approved by members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC); and individuals who meet very low income guidelines will be referred to the USDA home rehabilitation program, which also includes grants for individual homeowners who meet the income guidelines and are over age 62. Councilman Cara asked how the program is working and how much is loaned out. Director of Community Development Linkevich stated that more than half are paying consistently, a meeting with Solicitor Greek is planned for next week and she would look into how much has been loaned. A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Lasky to approve the recommended changes to the Tamaqua Rehabilitation Loan Program as presented. Acting Borough Manager Jones stated that reducing the total loan amount for individuals to \$10,000 would not be enough funds for a loan since costs to rehabilitate a property can exceed that amount. Ms. Linkevich stated that five applications have been received since July. She also discussed the sidewalk loan program. Councilman Connely asked if there is a way to combine the two loan programs. Mayor Morrison asked if the Rehabilitation Loan Program is a viable program since there have been only five applications since July, and if the loan amounts requested were greater than \$10,000. Councilman Gursky stated that a total loan amount of \$10,000 would be too low. Ms. Linkevich discussed enforcement and delinquency. A motion was made by Connely to table the pending motion. Councilman Cara rescinded his motion. The motion and second were rescinded. There was more discussion about

the following: outstanding loan amounts; going back to the CAC with the direction given tonight; and the total loan amount is not the issue but to review the process to obtain a loan.

Director of Community Development Linkevich also reported on the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) Authority meeting as follows: saw an increase in local tax revenue; the borough received approximately \$27,000 in local tax revenue; the state numbers would be in next month; the CRIZ Authority approved an application from Tamaqua Area Community Partnership (TACP) for the acquisition and development of 24 West Broad Street, the Tire Pros building; and TACP would qualify for approximately \$38,129 of CRIZ funding.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, Councilwoman Lasky reported that she had an ordinance prohibiting parking on the west side of Oak Street between Van Gelder and Spruce streets to present for council's consideration:

**AMENDED ORDINANCE NO. 686  
BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA,  
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING CHAPTER XVII, PART 1,  
TRAFFIC AND PARKING REGULATIONS, SECTION 33, PARKING PROHIBITED  
IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS.**

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing ordinance. Council recognized Mark Bower who thanked council for their action. Council recognized Kim Haldeman of 247 Van Gelder Street who stated that the people that live in that area also thank council. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Lasky, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to have the Parking and Traffic Committee look into placing pedestrian signage at the intersection of West Broad and Lehigh streets. There was some discussion about this matter. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve an extension of a temporary handicapped parking space for 305 Spruce Street for one additional month. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Lasky, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing exterior railings and posts on the front porch at 730 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 Gursky, seconded by Cara, and unanimously approved.

Under the Streetlights Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve the \$47,800 expenditure to PPL for the preliminary site work and engineering for the acquisition of the Tamaqua Streetlights with funds designated from the New Revolving Fund. There was some discussion about the following: using funds from the New Revolving Fund until another funding source is obtained and then the New Revolving Fund would be reimbursed; the staff is looking into funding options; proposals were received from two local banks and hoping for more proposals; USDA is still an option; an annual savings of \$70,000; and the lending institutions had questions

regarding the cost for the disposal of the high pressure sodium lights and the cost to replace light emitting diode (LED) streetlights in the future. Council recognized Tom Schlorf who asked where the revolving money was obtained from. Councilman Gursky stated that the funds in the Old Revolving and New Revolving funds were obtained from the loans the borough made and that were paid back. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Evans, seconded by Gursky, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Morrison stated that the borough received pension information from Blackford Ventures and that the information should be given to the Police Pension and Non-Uniformed Pension committees, the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee, and Univest Municipal Pension Services to review.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Tom Schlorf of 223 Orwigsburg Street asked why nothing has been done to fix the problems at the 200 block of South Street. Mr. Schlorf stated that he reported this approximately two and one-half months ago. There was some discussion about this matter.

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. Councilman Evans commented on the statistics from the Police Department Summary of Activities report for August 2016 and residents concerns that were presented at the last council meeting. Councilman Evans commended the Police Department for doing an excellent job and our goal is to support them in any way. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Gursky and seconded by Cara to pay all properly approved bills and claims against the borough. After some discussion about the payment of an invoice from Entech Engineering Inc., the motion and second were amended as follows: A recommendation was made to pay all properly approved bills and claims against the borough with the exception of voucher number 33133 payable to Entech Engineering Inc. in the amount of \$2,313.75. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Cara, and unanimously approved.

Under New Business, there was some discussion about the following: a potential issue with a building that may need demolition; if there is a way that the Code Enforcement Department can work with the local Magistrate; and Quality of Life violations and enforcement. A recommendation was made to compile a list of three strike code enforcement violation convictions and present them to the Magistrate for legal action. Council recognized George Haldeman who agreed with the motion, and stated that he has a home next to one of these properties. Mr. Haldeman also recommended that council look into having a full-time Code Enforcement Officer. Council recognized Assistant Fire Chief Mark Bower who stated that they receive calls to go to these properties and also find that the condemned notices have been removed from the house. There was much discussion about this matter. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss personnel matters. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 8:35 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 9:00 p.m.

President Mace announced that an executive session was held to discuss personnel matters.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Cara, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer