

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of October on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 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, Thomas Cara, Brian Connely, Mary Linkevich and David Mace. Absent was Councilmember Ritchie Linkhorst. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Henry Woods, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire and Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese. Absent was Solicitor Michael S. Greek.

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 Connely. The roll was called with six councilmembers present and one absent.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on September 17, 2019 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from George Taylor, outreach team of Zion Lutheran Church, requesting permission to close Mauch Chunk Street from Greenwood Street to Market Street on October 27, 2019 from noon to 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. for a "Trunk or Treat" event. 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 David J. Meredith, parade chairperson/Post Adjutant 0173 for the Tamaqua American Legion C.H. Berry Post Number 173, requesting permission to hold the annual Tamaqua Veterans Day Parade on November 9, 2019 beginning at 10:00 a.m. The parade would begin at the east end of town by the Tamaqua Insurance building and end at West Broad and Lehigh streets. 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 Jarrad Bernitsky stating that he is resigning from his position as a wastewater treatment plant operator effective October 31, 2019, which would include two earned vacation days to be used on October 30th and October 31st. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Jarrad Bernitsky. 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.

Communication was received from Pamela McCullion stating that the Planning Commission is recommending allowing a temporary building to be a permanent structure, as per the discussion with Joshua Esposito and the SALDO requirements, for M&M Storage. Manager Steigerwalt explained the request. A recommendation was made to approve a permanent structure for M&M Storage. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the 2019-2020 insurance policy renewal with The Seltzer Group as follows: a handout was provided for the 2019 renewal summary; there was a reduction of

approximately \$21,000 in the insurance rates from 2018 to 2019; rate changes in the worker's compensation rates; the bulk of the rate reduction was due to the volunteer fire department rating; and every year the borough renews its property and vehicle list and adjustments are made. A recommendation was made to approve the 2019-2020 insurance policy renewal with The Seltzer Group. 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 also reported on the Heating Oil Contract bid opening results from October 10, 2019 as follows: two bids were received for the No. 2 Heating Oil to be delivered to various borough facilities and volunteer fire companies; the lowest bidder for the fixed price at \$2.1958 per gallon was Papco of Aston, PA; the lowest bidder for the floating price at \$0.183 per gallon was Fegley Oil Company of Tamaqua, PA.; Papco's bid is less than last year's contract fixed price of \$2.50 per gallon; and Manager Steigerwalt is recommending awarding the contract to Papco. A recommendation was made to award the contract for No. 2 Heating Oil to Papco of 2 New Road, Suite 311, Aston, PA at the fixed price of \$2.1958 per gallon. There was some discussion that Papco is strictly a broker and subcontracts. 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 also reported on the Owl Creek Road Paving Project as follows: the bulk of the work is finished but there is still some shoulder work that needs to be done; the paving on Pleasant Row is finished; the borough did seek advice from a consultant, Lester Fenkner of McAdoo, PA, at cost of \$20.00 per hour for no more than 50 hours; the project estimated cost was \$184,630.00 and the actual cost was \$162,404.76; and if the project had been contracted out the project cost would have been approximately \$280,000 for the same work.

A recommendation was made to approve the hire of Lester Fenkner of McAdoo, PA as a project consultant at a cost of \$1,000.00. 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 Borough Manager's report, there was some discussion about the following: extended a thank you to Rush Township for loaning the borough its equipment; additional shoulder work at Route 309; and using milling material for the shoulder work. Councilman Bowman stated that the Street and Water Departments combined in force and worked well together to complete the paving project. Councilman Bowman commended the borough employees and also Public Works Director Rob Jones, as he worked just as hard as the borough employees; and it was a good group effort.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that Micah Gursky, director of the Tamaqua Area Community Partnership, Inc., DBA Tamaqua Spirit of Christmas Festival, is asking council to consider a request to contribute the amount of \$2,000.00 to assist with a project that would be updating and replacing the light display at Depot Square Park. A recommendation was made to donate \$2,000.00 towards the light display at Depot Square Park. President Mace stated that the overall cost of the new light display is approximately \$7,000.00. 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 Cara, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that the Tamaqua Civil Service Commission would be conducting a Civil Service Examination for the position of full-time officer on November 12, 2019.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he started working on the 2019 preliminary budget and it should be available for the next regular meeting.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported that the 2018 local tax baseline for the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) increased from 2017 to 2018. The 2018 tax increment in the amount of \$20,421.77 for the Tamaqua CRIZ was due by October 15th and was submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue.

Director of Community Development Calabrese also reported that she would be attending a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) hearing in Pottsville on October 16th and the Citizen's Advisory Committee held their first meeting on October 3rd.

Chief Woods reported on the following: a new police vehicle; an older unmarked car was hit by a deer; the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is October 26th and it is also sponsored by Safer Streets; and the body cameras were ordered and on their way.

Under the Building and Equipment Committee report, a recommendation was made to purchase a vehicle repair subscription for the mechanics from ALLDATA LLC at a cost of \$1,500.00 with funds designated from the Building and Equipment 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 Connely, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, Councilman Cara reported that he had an ordinance establishing a stop intersection for northbound traffic on Market Street at the intersection with Biddle Street to present for council's consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. 711

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NUMBER 710, CHAPTER 326 VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC, ARTICLE II TRAFFIC REGULATIONS, SECTION 326-16.

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing ordinance. 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 Linkevich, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for paving the existing driveway and to rebuild the retaining walls surrounding the existing driveway using paver blocks at 305-307 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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a garage in the rear of 312 Mahanoy Street but leave the garage's concrete floor for continued use as off-street parking. 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 Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a concrete ramp at 801 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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to build an addition and concrete patio for outdoor seating, with a fence to separate the outdoor patio from the public sidewalk along East Broad Street, at 123 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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace distributed three handouts for CLEARGOV which is a communication company that provides a full suite of turnkey solutions to help local officials drive transparency, streamline budgeting, and better engage residents. Mayor Gerace discussed the following: the Transparency and Performance, the Project Communications and the Department Dashboards handouts; an initial cost of approximately \$6,000.00 and a cost of approximately \$4,000.00 to \$5,000.00 in the following years; a designated representative to assist the borough; and helps give the borough transparency. There was some discussion about this matter. Councilwoman Linkevich volunteered to review CLEARGOV with Mayor Gerace.

Mayor Gerace stated that Code Enforcement Officer Greg Kurtz is doing an outstanding job but is overwhelmed. Mayor Gerace and Chief Woods met with Mr. Kurtz and decided to loan part-time Patrolman Gallagher to help him with Quality of Life violations. There was much discussion about the following: using police officers to help with code enforcement; the part-time police officer budget; when a police officer is performing code enforcement, the expense for these hours should be charged to the code enforcement department instead of to the police department; a police officer rate versus hiring a part-time person for code enforcement only; code enforcement revenues; it is budget season and Manager Steigerwalt could look into budgeting to hire a part-time person to assist with code enforcement; President Mace mentioned a part-time person for the front desk as well; and Mr. Kurtz is using part-time Utility Billing Clerk, Allison Tonkin, to file during slow periods in the billing department. A recommendation was made to hire part-time Patrolman Gallagher at a rate of \$17.00 per hour to perform code enforcement duties. Secretary/Treasurer DeWire stated that Patrolman Gallagher's current hourly rate is \$17.00 but he is approaching the 1,000 hours of service hourly rate of \$19.00. There was some discussion about the part-time patrolman pay scale and that the code enforcement hours worked by Patrolman Gallagher would not count towards the 1,000 hours of service. 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 approved by a 5-1 vote with Councilman Connely opposed.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Kathryn Kunkel of 125 Owl Creek Road expressed her concerns about the following: where does one obtain a permit to burn houses; ordinances governing burning permits; a person is burning a house for approximately four weeks now; she comes home at night and can hardly breathe from the smell; the person is burning close to the forest and feels it should be a controlled burn; safety

issues; and wants the burning stopped. There was some discussion about the following: a demolition permit is issued by code enforcement and a burning permit is issued by the fire chief; the person she mentioned had a permit to demolish; a burning permit was issued at a later time after the person already burned; demolition debris cannot be burned; and asking Fire Chief James Connely to re-review the burning permit.

Paul Corinchock of 737 East Broad Street expressed his concerns about the following: a storage facility; approximately a dozen abandoned vehicles outside a fenced area have been there approximately ten years; and the matter was brought to the attention of former Code Enforcement Officer Esposito. Chief Woods stated that if the vehicles are on the street it is a police issue, but if they are on a property, then it is a code issue. Chief Woods would look into the matter. Manager Steigerwalt would have Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz look into the 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. 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.

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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved with Councilman Cara abstaining from Voucher Number 39990.

Under New Business, Councilman Cara distributed and discussed information that he received when he attended the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs Fall Conference.

Under New Business, Councilman Bowman discussed the second phase of the Owl Creek Paving Project for 2020.

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 8:28 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:48 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 8:48 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Connely, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer