

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of January on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. through the Zoom video conference system. The public was able to participate in the council meeting using a computer, tablet or smart phone with an internet connection using the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84018975806> and by entering Meeting ID 840 1897 5806. Individuals who did not have internet access were able to participate by telephone by dialing 1-929-436-2866 and entering Meeting ID 840 1897 5806 #.

Present were Councilmembers Robert Amentler, Ronald Bowman, Thomas Cara, Brian Connely, Mary Linkevich, Ritchie Linkhorst and David Mace. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Michael Hobbs, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Public Works Director Robert Jones, Solicitor Anthony Odorizzi, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer Amy Macalush and Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese.

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. The invocation was given by Councilman Cara. President Mace stated that since the borough is using a video conferencing platform, the Pledge of Allegiance was waived. The roll was called with all council members present.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on December 15, 2020 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Bowman, seconded by Cara, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from William F. Price Sr. of 733 East Broad Street expressing an interest in filling the vacancy of Councilman Cara.

Communication was received from Brian Klusman of 345 East Elm Street expressing an interest in serving on the Planning Commission.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on a letter received from Barry Isett & Associates, Inc. regarding the preliminary/final plan review of the St Luke's parking lot project, referred to as the Biddle Street Parking Lot or as the Railroad Street Parking Lot. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the requested waivers, along with conditional preliminary/final approval for the project were granted by the Planning Commission, and can now be considered for conditional approval by Borough Council. The following Eastern Schuylkill Regional Planning Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) waivers have been requested for the project:

- 1) SALDO SECTION 502.D.13 – A waiver is requested from showing all existing utilities and fire hydrants within 100 feet of the subdivision boundaries must be shown on the plan.
- 2) SALDO SECTION 608.D – A waiver is requested from the requirement that for stormwater basin design, the post-development 10-year peak discharge shall not exceed the pre-development 2-year peak discharge.
- 3) SALDO SECTION 608.D.4 – A waiver is requested from the requirement that for calculating runoff, the prior to construction condition shall be considered as only wooded, or meadow, including any areas currently covered by impervious surfaces.

A recommendation was made to grant approval for the requested waivers and to grant conditional approval for the project. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt reminded residents of the following: Christmas trees will be collected as time and weather permits on regular garbage days; property owners must maintain a three-foot wide path on their sidewalk that is clear of all snow and ice; snow and ice must be removed from sidewalks within 24 hours after the storm ends; and to pay attention to snow removal signs.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that there are a few vacancies on the following boards/commissions: Board of Health, Citizens Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, and the Public Library Board.

Under the Borough Manager's Report, a recommendation was made to appoint Brian Klusman of 345 East Elm Street to the Planning Commission. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that revisions are being made to the floodplain ordinance in order to comply with current regulations. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the revisions, as recommended by the Pennsylvania Municipal League, were forward to Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz and Solicitor Odorizzi for review and that a draft ordinance would be presented to Council for consideration sometime in the near future. Manager Steigerwalt stated that there are a number of changes being made to the flood plain maps and that the new maps would take effect on May 18, 2021.

Manager Steigerwalt requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss personnel and legal matters.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to move a handicapped parking space from 609 Arlington Street to 632 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 Linkhorst, seconded by Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Under the Ad-Hoc Historic Ordinance Committee report, Chairman Connely reported that the committee met with Zoning to discuss the issue of new signage at the East End Fire Company and not meeting the Historic District Ordinance. A motion was made by Connely, and seconded by Bowman, to modify Historic District Ordinance Section 192-10 and Section 192-11, which will add or modify to exempt non-profit emergency service organizations. It was noted that because it's an ordinance, modifications must be advertised first. The motion and second were amended as follows: A recommendation was made to advertise modifications to Historic District Ordinance Section 192-10 and Section 192-11, which will add or modify to exempt non-profit emergency service organizations. Chairman Connely clarified that this pertains only to the portion of the Historic District ordinance for signs and that any other changes or additions will still need the proper zoning applications, permits, approvals, etc. 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 meeting was opened to the floor.

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

Solicitor Odorizzi provided an update on the M&M Storage project as follows: the improvements maintenance agreement is complete but there are still some issues with the bond, and the letter of credit is just about finalized.

Solicitor Odorizzi requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss legal matters.

Under New Business, Councilman Connely discussed a proposed increase in the sewer rate beginning in the next billing cycle to accommodate the cost for necessary upgrades to the sewer plant. Councilman Connely stated that it has been about four years since the rates were increased for sewer. Councilman Connely discussed the following: upgrading the system to comply with DEP regulations; the cost for the system upgrade is in the neighborhood of \$10 million; financing; increasing the rates to cover the debt service; the sewer rates are considerably low compared to surrounding communities; Rush Township cost sharing and the borough has been in a good financial position to minimize increases over the years but is out of options at this point to bring the sewer plant up to current state. A motion was made by Connely, and seconded by Bowman, to approve a \$25 per quarter increase in the sewer rate. President Mace questioned if this is a change to an ordinance or if it can be done by a motion. Solicitor Odorizzi stated that it should actually be done by resolution and that council can authorize him to prepare a resolution. The motion and second were amended as follows: a recommendation was made to approve a \$25 per quarter increase in the sewer rate and to authorize the Borough Solicitor to draft the resolution reflecting the same. Manager Steigerwalt recommended setting an effective date for the rate increase so it coincides with the beginning of a billing period. The motion and second were amended as follows: a recommendation was made to increase the sewer rate from \$105 to \$130 per quarter effective with the next billing cycle and to authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare a resolution reflecting the same. 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 hold an executive session to discuss personnel and legal 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 Amentler, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 7:30 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:40 p.m.

Councilman Cara left the meeting during the executive session.

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

A recommendation was made to appoint Thomas Nelson as part-time code enforcement at a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour and at any given time may still be used as a part-time laborer at a pay rate of \$12.50 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 Connely, and approved by a 6-0 vote.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:43 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Amentler, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer