

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of March on Tuesday, March 19, 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. Councilmember Ritchie Linkhorst arrived later in the meeting. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Henry Woods, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, 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 Bowman. The roll was called with six councilmembers present and one absent.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on February 19, 2019 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under Special Business, President Mace presented a Certificate of Achievement to Bronson Strouse in recognition of winning the PIAA District XI Class 2A Wrestling Championship on February 23, 2019. Bronson took first place in the 285-pound weight class and earned his 100<sup>th</sup> career win in the semifinals.

Councilman Linkhorst arrived at approximately 7:05 p.m.

Communication was received from Charles Blesse stating that he is resigning from his position as a part-time police officer with the Tamaqua Police Department. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Charles Blesse. 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 Earl Edmondson stating that he is retiring from his position as Chief Mechanic and his last physical day of work will be on March 20, 2019. Mr. Edmondson stated that he would be using his accrued paid time off making his last day of employment on or around July 24, 2019. A recommendation was made to accept the retirement of Earl Edmondson. 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 Corey L. Smolar of Hiller's Hideaway of 514 East Union Street, requesting permission to close the 500 block of East Union Street from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on May 4, 2019 for a Bike Run Benefit for Alicia Houser. 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 Linkevich, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from David J. Meredith, adjutant of the C.H. Berry Post No. 173 of The American Legion and parade chairperson, requesting permission to hold the annual Memorial Day Parade on May 27<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:00 a.m. 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 Jeffrey P. Kelly Esquire of Portnoff Law Associates, Ltd. stating that Clair J. and Amy M. Quick inherited a property on Orwigsburg Street, tax parcel number 65-16-0094, from Michelle Tentylo that is subject to delinquent taxes. The communication is requesting that the borough waive \$79.33 in interest. 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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Lisa M. Hoey, Community Development Representative, stating that the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of the Anthracite Region will be held on May 11, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the Tamaqua High School Stadium. A pre-event promotion called "Paint the Town Purple" will be celebrated April 29<sup>th</sup> through May 12<sup>th</sup>. The organization is asking the borough to consider hanging purple flags at the parking meters along Broad Street. The communication is also requesting that yard signs be placed along Railroad Street coming into town from Hometown and at the Municipal Building. A recommendation was made to grant permission for the Relay for Life Committee to hang purple flags at the parking meters along Broad Street, contingent upon receiving permission from the American Legion C.H. Berry Post No. 173, and to place yard signs along Railroad Street coming into town from Hometown and at the Municipal Building. 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 Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Francis Betz, secretary of the Citizens Fire Company #1 requesting permission to hold their annual Bazaar on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. The communication is requesting permission to close Hegarty Avenue and Rowe Street. The communication is requesting permission to close Hegarty Avenue from July 9<sup>th</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup>. The 100 block of Rowe Street would only be closed during the hours of the Bazaar from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The communication also requested permission to hold their annual Fire Apparatus parade on July 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. The parade would start at the high school and proceed through town and end back on West Broad Street at South Railroad Street. A recommendation was made to grant the requests. 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 on the following: J.D. Eckman would be starting the ADA ramps next week; the ADA renovations to the Borough Hall bathrooms was awarded to Ondra-Huyett Associates, Inc. of Allentown, PA in the amount of \$35,565.00; the Street Light Replacement Project is completed and the borough is seeing a significant savings; the demolition project at 241 Lafayette Street is underway; gave an update on the retrofitting of the downtown streetlights; gave an update on the purchase of a vacant lot on South Railroad Street and its subdivision is being reviewed at the county and local levels; and advertising for bids for the sale of four lots on Hunter Street. There was much discussion about the sale of the four lots on Hunter Street as follows: appraisers' opinion; continuing the use as a parking lot; making it a condition of the sale that in the event the property is not used as a parking lot, the ownership would revert back

to the borough; putting it in the bid specifications that the lots must be used as a parking lot for a specified number of years; the borough currently rents seven parking spaces and to make that another condition; locking the borough into a parking lot concept if the purchaser has other intent; CRIZ funding and an interested party is looking to use the lots as a parking lot; bid specifications; a license agreement; keeping the process moving forward; and Solicitor Greek would need more details prior to advertising the sale of the four lots.

A recommendation was made to advertise for bids for the sale of four lots on Hunter Street with the bid specifications to include the following conditions: the purchase is contingent upon a reversionary interest set forth in the deed in favor of the Borough providing that the property shall be used as and developed as a parking lot, and in the event it is no longer used in such manner, the property shall revert to the Borough of Tamaqua; the purchaser shall execute an agreement with the Borough of Tamaqua to comply with all Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone Authority (CRIZ) requirements as well as the reservation of seven (7) parking places in the lot for adjoining property owners under reasonable terms and conditions set forth by the purchaser; and with a minimum bid of \$12,000.00. There was much discussion about the following: concerns about selling the lots and a stipulation that the lots must be used for parking and parking only; there are seven parking spaces there now; if all parcels are used for parking and if planned properly you could have approximately 24 parking spaces there; and set back requirements. Council recognized Thomas Schlorf of 223 Orwigsburg Street who expressed his concerns that the sale sounds like a backyard deal. President Mace stated that the borough has no intention of improving the rest of the property there and that the borough is going through the proper channels by advertising the sale of the four lots. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Bowman, and approved by a 6-1 vote with Councilman Connely opposed.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on Tamarack Square and future sewage facilities.

Under the Borough Manager's report, there was also some discussion about the following: street sweeping would resume when the temperatures are consistently above freezing; contacting PennDOT regarding the terrible condition of Routes 209 and 309; and having the fire companies clean the sidewalks for the Memorial Day parade.

Chief Woods reported that he met with the Camera Committee regarding the expansion of the camera system and body cameras. Chief Woods stated that he was contacted by an entity that may provide the Police Department with a donation to be used for officer safety. There was some discussion about the past approval for the use of body cameras and a Body Camera Standard Operating Procedure.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to accept a proposal from Dave Christ of Tamaqua to inspect and certify the borough parking meters at a cost of approximately \$350.00. 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 Cara, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to send Joshua Esposito to a Rental Property Inspection Management Program Training class in Grantville, PA on April 10, 2019 at a cost of \$135.00. 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 send Ann Marie Calabrese to a Writing Effective Grant Proposals Training Class in Wilkes-Barre, PA on April 25, 2019 at a cost of \$100.00. 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.

Chairwoman Linkevich of the Recreation and Youth Committee reported that she had a resolution authorizing the filing of an application for a 2019 Keystone Grant for building renovations at the Tamaqua Public Library to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION 2019-3**  
**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 KEYSTONE GRANT FOR**  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY 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 Linkevich, seconded by Connely, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Chairwoman Linkevich of the Recreation and Youth Committee also reported that the pool opening date will change due to changes to the ending of the school calendar year and that the borough has advertised for pool personnel.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Ryan Poeldnurk as a part-time police officer. 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 Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to purchase a professional style crime scene camera at a cost of \$718.67 for the Police Department. 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a motion was made by Cara and seconded by Bowman to hire Allison Tonkin as a part-time Utility Clerk at a rate of \$15.00 per hour, with a tentative daily work schedule of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and an effective start date of two weeks. After some discussion about work hours, the motion and second were amended as follows: a recommendation was made to hire Allison Tonkin as a part-time Utility Clerk at a rate of \$15.00 per hour with hours not to exceed 30 hours per week and an effective start date of two weeks. Council recognized Thomas Schlorf who asked if the position was advertised. Councilwoman Linkevich stated that it was advertised a long time ago. There was no one else 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 announced that he would be holding a tour of the police station and police vehicles next Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and ice cream would be provided to participants.

Mayor Gerace discussed the condition of the benches that are located in the downtown area. He asked residents and businesses to consider donating funds to purchase new benches. The cost of one new bench is approximately \$200.00. There was some discussion about this matter.

Mayor Gerace reported that the Tamaqua Police Department Coffee with a Cop event went well.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Larry Padora, owner of Padora's Italian Bakery, and John Ross, owner of the Tamaqua Station Restaurant, discussed installing a train platform at the Tamaqua Train Station. A platform would bring passenger trains to Tamaqua as a destination experience for dining at various local restaurants, events at the Tamaqua Community Art Center and the Tamaqua Historical Society, walking tours, and other activities in town. Mr. Padora spoke with Andy Muller, owner of the Reading, Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad, who is considering expanding passenger service but would need a train platform in order to disembark passengers. Mr. Muller would contribute towards the cost. The cost estimate would be from \$15,000.00 to \$25,000.00. There was much discussion about this matter. President Mace stated that council's Railroad Committee would welcome meeting with railroad personnel.

Marlene Boyle and Francis Boyle of 314 East Elm Street expressed their concerns about the following: a recreational vehicle parked at 308 East Elm Street with an expired registration; problems in this neighborhood; concerns about a property located at 306 East Elm Street; and maintenance of a portion of a borough property near their home.

South Ward Fire Chief Mark Bower asked council to notify Fire Chief James Connely about washing the sidewalks for the Memorial Day parade.

Thomas Schlorf of 223 Orwigsburg Street asked about the snow pile in front of the Tamaqua High Rise building and why was it not removed. Mr. Schlorf also asked how much a mill generates. Manager Steigerwalt stated that a mill generates approximately \$71,000.00 and each fire company receives an annual allocation of \$14,000.00. Mr. Schlorf asked if the ladder truck is paid off. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the ladder truck is not paid off.

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 Cara, 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.

Under New Business, Mayor Gerace reported that the Tamaqua Police Department has a Facebook page.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:22 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer