

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of April on Tuesday, April 20, 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/86524277359> and by entering Meeting ID 865 2427 7359. Individuals who did not have internet access were able to participate by telephone by dialing 1-929-436-2866 and entering Meeting ID 865 2427 7359#.

Present were Councilmembers Robert Amentler, Ronald Bowman, Brian Connely, Jay Hollenbach Jr., 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, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire, Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese and Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Gregory Kurtz Jr.

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. President Mace stated that since the borough is using a video conferencing platform, the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance were being waived. The roll was called with all councilmembers present.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on March 16, 2021 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from the Tamaqua Elementary PTO Board requesting permission to use the Bungalow Park Pavilion from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on May 29, 2021 for an end-of-year party for the fifth grade class. The communication also requested the use of the pool from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and that the pavilion rental and pool fees be waived. A recommendation was made to grant the requests. There was some discussion about coordinating the event with the Pool Manager and staff, the Tamaqua Elementary PTO Board providing adequate adult supervision and providing the borough with a certificate of insurance. 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 Judy A. Hoppes, festival chairperson of the Spirit of Christmas Festival Committee, stating that the committee is planning to hold a "Christmas in July" Festival this year. The committee is requesting permission to block off a portion of South Railroad Street on July 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> from Cottage Avenue to the end of Tink's Antiques parking lot. The time span for this request would be from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on July 17<sup>th</sup> and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on July 18<sup>th</sup>. The communication also stated that if approval is granted, the borough would supply the barricades, and that the committee would set up and take down the barricades at the above-mentioned times. 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 Brian Ouly, Adjutant of the Sons of the American Legion Post 173, requesting permission to have three parking spots reserved in the front of the Legion building from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on May 30<sup>th</sup> for a food truck and benefit event for the Sons. The event will be coordinated with the Police Department for meter bags and horses

with the Street Department. 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 Connely, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Albert L. Gricoski, Director of the Schuylkill County Election Bureau, stating that in preparation for the upcoming Municipal Primary Election on May 18, 2021, the bureau is reaching out to the polling locations to ensure the availability of the facilities. A recommendation was made to grant permission for the County to use the Borough Hall as a voting precinct for the Primary Election. Councilman Connely expressed his concerns about the county sanitizing the borough building. Councilman Connely asked if the borough received a response from the county in regards to a letter that was sent to them as to why the borough did not receive any CARES funding. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the borough did not receive any CARES funding or response from the county. The borough sanitized the borough building and the county did reimburse the borough for the cost. The county did receive the borough's letter regarding the CARES funding. 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 approved by a 6-1 vote with Connely opposed.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution extending the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency of March 20, 2020 for an additional thirty (30) day additional period to expire and terminate on May 22, 2021, unless further extended by resolution of the Borough of Tamaqua, or unless terminated earlier by the Borough Council, to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-5**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 10A06 OF THE PENNSYLVANIA BOROUGH CODE, AND SECTION 7501 OF THE PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES CODE, EXTENDING THE MAYOR OF TAMAQUA'S DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY OF MARCH 20, 2020 FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF THIRTY (30) DAYS.**

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.

Manager Steigerwalt discussed a proposal for professional engineering services from Alfred Benesch for the Wabash Creek Projects. The proposal includes all engineering work (survey, design, bidding and construction administration) to complete all the Wabash Creek projects on the borough's list. Manager Steigerwalt also discussed the borough's initiative to apply for up to \$500,000.00 for a Flood Mitigation grant for the Wabash Creek Culvert Rehabilitation. Task 1 (Grant Site Design) covers the engineering work the borough needs to submit with our Flood Mitigation Grant application and the cost for this work is \$6,300. Tasks 2 through 5 only apply if our grant application is approved. Those tasks cover the remaining engineering work through bidding and construction; and Alfred Benesch will not proceed with those tasks unless they are approved by council. A recommendation was made to approve the proposal from Alfred Benesch to complete Task 1 in the proposal in the amount of \$6,300 with funds designated from the Wabash Fund. 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 also reported that he had a resolution authorizing the submission of the application for a Flood Mitigation Program Grant in the amount of \$500,000 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for rehabilitation of multiple sections of the Wabash Creek Culvert to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-6**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, REQUESTING A FLOOD MITIGATION PROGRAM GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$500,000 FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FINANCING AUTHORITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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.

Manager Steigerwalt stated that the work that Alfred Benesch is doing for the borough is helpful to us whether we get the grant or not. This is work that needs to be done at some point, and it is not money wasted.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the Schuylkill County Demolition Program. A condition of the county's program is that the municipality must own the property that is being submitted for demolition. The borough has submitted applications to the county for 252 West Cottage Avenue and 307 East Broad Street. An exception is being made for the 307 East Broad Street property, which is owned by the Tamaqua Historical Society, because the county is comfortable working directly with the Tamaqua Historical Society.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he had a resolution requesting the approval of a demolition request to the County of Schuylkill in the amount of \$55,000 for the demolition of 252 West Cottage Avenue, parcel number 65-15-0044.001 to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-7**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA APPROVING SUBMISSION OF A DEMOLITION REQUEST TO THE COUNTY OF SCHUYLKILL**

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.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the status of the Street Paving Project as follows: Alfred Benesch finished the design for the paving of the streets on the list; the county approved the advertising; the bids are due May 17<sup>th</sup> and reviewed by the county and the borough; the base bid is Market and Elm streets and then there is a number of alternates; the County Commissioners would award the bids using Community Development Block Grant funding; the tentative award would be May 26<sup>th</sup>; and Alfred Benesch is sending the bid documents.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the status of the Lincoln Street Wall Project as follows: looking at building a new wall in front of the old one; building a new wall on private property at 522 Washington Street and 524 Washington Street which would require easements; and Solicitor Odorizzi prepared two easements. Manager Steigerwalt asked that council authorize President Mace to sign the easements provided that the property owners of 522 Washington Street

and 524 Washington Street agree. A recommendation was made to authorize President Mace to sign the easements negotiated with the owners of 522 Washington Street and 524 Washington Street for the Lincoln Street Wall Project. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Amentler, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the county-wide litter clean-up taking place this Saturday. Anyone from the public who wants to assist with the borough clean-up should meet at the M&T Bank parking lot at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday.

President Mace asked for updates on the sidewalk improvements for Burger King and the Spruce Street railroad crossing. Public Works Director Jones stated that Burger King got final permission from PennDOT and that it will be done before PennDOT paves. He stated that there is no update on the Spruce Street railroad crossing. The railroad wants to replace the crossing at Broad Street first and wants to close Broad Street for approximately two to three days using Spruce Street as a detour route.

President Mace also asked if PennDOT is still planning to do Route 309 this year. Public Works Director Jones stated that as far as he knows, it is still on the schedule with milling and paving possibly in August. It would be curb to curb milling. There was some discussion about the deterioration of the patches done by PennDOT in the area of the 400-500 block of East Broad Street.

Councilman Bowman stated that Burger King is currently accepting bids on their project.

Chief Hobbs reported that on April 24<sup>th</sup> between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., the department would be teaming up with the Schuylkill County Sheriff's Department and a few other police departments in the area for a Drug Take-Back Program.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported on the following: the City Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) audit was completed and sent to the state; Kellner's Dam clean-up and extended a thank you to Highwood in Hometown and the Tamaqua Area 7<sup>th</sup> grade students; Logan Betz and company did the Eagle Scout Project at Kellner's Dam; a Kids Fishing Derby this weekend at Kellner's Dam; a clean-up at the Bungalow is planned for May 1<sup>st</sup> from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; she will be in touch with the Recreation and Youth Committee regarding other Bungalow projects; the Tamaqua Dines Out Program; the Tamaqua Public Library dinner fundraiser was postponed to April 29<sup>th</sup>; a self-care seminar begins tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. via Zoom; and the Tom Banditelli Sr. Memorial 30-day Fishing Derby starts on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a proposal from Lancer Systems of Quakertown, PA for the purchase of four Lancer L15 Defense Rifle packages at a cost of \$6,396. Councilman Connely stated that the cost is approximately \$4,000 to the borough. The Police Department received private donations and money from the Schuylkill County DA's Office. The Police Department will also try to get proceeds from the sale of old rifle parts. 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 approve the sale of old rifle parts valued at approximately \$1,250. President Mace asked what the intended

platform for the sale of these parts is. Councilman Connely stated that the police department needs to work through a licensed type dealer. 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 request that the Civil Service Commission conduct a Police Officer Exam and prepare an eligibility list with a minimum of three candidates. It was noted that the Civil Service Commission is fully staffed. 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 advertise an ordinance establishing a stop intersection for westbound traffic on Brown Street at the intersection with Pitt Street. There was some discussion about the following: there was a change in the bus schedule for the school; there is no control over that intersection at all; concerns from a resident; looking at possibly including other stop sign intersections to make it more economical if we advertise other signs together; another review of the traffic patterns first; and not prepared to include other stop signs yet. 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz presented four recommendations from the Historic Architectural Review Committee meeting held on April 5, 2021 for council's approval.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a four-foot by six-foot shed at 13-15 South Lehigh Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Amentler, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a fire-damaged structure at 31-33 North Railroad Street. Councilman Connely stated that he wants to make sure that this building would be taken down and that the demolition is being followed in accordance with the ordinances. 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 Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace fire-damaged siding, and to replace three front windows, one side window and one front door at 35 North Railroad Street. It was noted that the siding will be gray or tan and all trim will be wrapped in aluminum. 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 Amentler, 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 construct a two-foot by twelve-foot enclosure on the side of the building to house a lift at 409 East Broad Street. It was noted that it will have a metal roof and blue metal siding and the structure will also have a garage door. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Amentler, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Ben Turrano and Ethan Turrano as Assistant Pool Managers at a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour for the 2021 pool season. 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.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Hailey Toth as Head Lifeguard at a pay rate of \$11.00 per hour with an additional \$0.25 per hour for each year of service. 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.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire part-time lifeguards at a pay rate of \$10.00 per hour plus \$0.25 per hour for each year of service. The part-time life guards are as follows: Emily Breslin, Emma Coccio, Serena Jones, MacKayla Kester, Alex Porambo, Josie Schickram, Nick Wall and Rylee Wenzel. There was some discussion about this matter. It is noted that Serena Jones was included in the motion therefore an amended motion was not required. 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.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire part-time pool clerks at a pay rate of \$9.00 per hour plus \$0.25 per hour for each year of service. The part-time pool clerks are as follows: Madison Wickersham, Cindy Dover and Conner Knowlan. 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.

Mayor Gerace extended a thank you to council for approving the purchases for the Police Department and to conduct the Civil Service tests.

Mayor Gerace reported that a clean-up would be taking place at the Odd Fellows Cemetery at 9:00 a.m. on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

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

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

Solicitor Odorizzi reported that the Bungalow Concession Stand Lease has been finalized and the vendor is David Funk. The vendor would put insurance in place, an initial security deposit of \$250, pay all utilities and propane charges and agreed to have the concession stand open certain hours. A recommendation was made to select David Funk as the Bungalow Concession Stand vendor for the 2021 pool season pending upon receiving a copy of his insurance and a signed lease agreement. There

was some discussion about individuals as vendors versus businesses. 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.

Under the Solicitor's report, a recommendation was made to approve a lease agreement between David Funk and the Borough of Tamaqua for the operation of the Bungalow Concession Stand for the 2021 pool season and to authorize President Mace to sign the documents. 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.

President Mace requested that personnel matters be added to the request for the executive session.

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 Amentler, 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 with Councilman Hollenbach abstaining from voucher numbers V43444 and V43445.

Under New Business, Manager Steigerwalt discussed a resolution that he received from Micah Gursky of the Tamaqua Area Community Partnership (TACP). The resolution is for eliminating blight, revitalizing the downtown area and providing commercial space for a commercial service facility. The TACP is looking at getting some funding from the Commonwealth to acquire and demolish several blighted structures and build a large new state-of-the-art commercial and service type facility. The TACP does not have an exact location in mind. The TACP is asking that council approve a resolution authorizing the filing of a grant application in the amount of \$2,000,000. The borough must be the applicant for this grant, the TACP is willing to be the administrator, and the partnership is not asking for a monetary contribution from the borough. The local match would be coming from TACP, federal funds, private sources and in-kind donations.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution authorizing the filing of an application to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for a Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program Grant in the amount of \$2,000,000 to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-8  
A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, AUTHORIZING THE FILING  
OF AN APPLICATION TO THE COMMONWEALTH**

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing resolution. 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 Linkevich, seconded by Connely, and approved by a 5-2 roll call vote with Bowman and Linkhorst opposed.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss personnel, legal and real estate 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 8:07 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:45 p.m.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:46 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer