

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of August on Tuesday, August 7, 2018 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, Mary Linkevich, Ritchie Linkhorst and David Mace. 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. Solicitor Michael S. Greek arrived later in the meeting.

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 all councilmembers present.

President Mace announced that an executive session was held at 6:30 p.m. prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on July 17, 2018 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.

Communication was received from L. Karen Rottet, property manager for James M. Steele who is the owner of 700-712 East Broad Street. The communication is requesting that the "No Parking Between Signs" located behind his garages on the north side of Hazle Alley be removed. Mrs. Rottet stated that there are no other parking restrictions on the north or south sides of Hazle Alley. The signs, as they are now, restrict Mr. Steele from the same parking privilege as anyone who has property bordering on Hazle Alley. There was much discussion about this matter.

Communication was received from Brian Keich, president of the Tamaqua Lions Club, stating that the Annual Tamaqua Halloween Parade is planned for October 23, 2018 at 7:00 p.m., with a rain date of October 24, 2018. The parade will assemble on East Broad Street, in the vicinity of Lech Transportation, and proceed west on Broad Street and continue to St. Jerome's Church. The communication requested permission to prohibit parking along the parade route and assistance from the Tamaqua Police Department and the Fire Police. The communication also requested that East End Avenue be made a one-way going west from Laurel to Columbia streets so that traffic is going in one direction for drop off of the Tamaqua Band and Soccer teams at the M&M Storage Lot. A recommendation was made to grant the requests, and to authorize the use of the Tamaqua Fire Police. There was some discussion about vendor permits. 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 David Hadesty, president, stating that the Tamaqua Fire Police is requesting permission to use a borough garage, facing Broad Street, to house two vehicles and possibly utilize the office space and hold training classes. Mr. Hadesty expressed the Fire Police's concerns about the condition of the borough garage currently used to house their Fire Police vehicle. A recommendation was made to refer the matter to the Building and Equipment Committee. 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 gave an update on the Street Light Replacement Project as follows: sample LED light fixtures manufactured by Current by GE and Acuity Brands AEL Autobahn Series were installed in the 500 and 600 blocks of Arlington Street; he requested that council look at both types of samples to help determine which product the borough wants; the choice of light fixtures would be discussed at the next meeting; and still waiting for an answer from PennDOT regarding the use of Liquid Fuels funds for the project.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he is working on bids for heating oil procurement and the 2018-2019 insurance policy renewal with The Seltzer Group.

Under the Borough Manager's report, a recommendation was made to approve a proposal from Alfred Benesch and Company of Pottsville, PA in the amount of \$4,400.00 for the annual inspection of the Upper and Lower Owl Creek Dams. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Evans, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he has a quote for valve work at the Upper Owl Creek Dam from L/B Water Service, Inc. of Ephrata, PA in the amount of \$5,976.00. There was some discussion about a mechanical defect of the valve. A recommendation was made to approve the purchase of two 20 inch butterfly valves from L/B Water Service, Inc. of Ephrata, PA in the amount of \$5,976.00, to have the borough employees install the valve at the Owl Creek Dam and to have the Solicitor prepare a notice to the company responsible for the manufacturing defect. 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 a draft ordinance establishing rules and regulations for public displays of fireworks has been prepared by Solicitor Greek. President Mace referred the draft ordinance to the Public Safety Committee to review and requested a two week turnaround time.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he has an individual in the community interested in starting an electronics recycling program in Tamaqua. President Mace assigned Councilmembers Linkevich, Linkhorst and Cara, with Councilmember Linkevich as the Chairperson, to an ad-hoc committee of council to address this matter.

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

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that the West Broad Street Wabash Creek Bridge Project road opening should be on August 19<sup>th</sup> as scheduled with some project activity afterwards.

Under the Borough Manager's report, Councilman Evans stated that he is getting various complaints regarding streetscape issues. It is the property owner's responsibility to maintain the sidewalks. There was some discussion about having the borough workers go through the Broad Street corridor and to encourage property owners to maintain their sidewalks. There was some discussion about the maintenance of the trees that were planted in the streetscape area.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported on the 2018 Community Development Block Grant budget and the North Ward paving project and cooperative agreement between Schuylkill County and the Borough of Tamaqua.

Under the Director of Community Development's report, there was some discussion regarding unexpended demolition funds, an updated demolition list and the City Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) program.

Chief Woods reported that the department has a good group of officers that are community oriented.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to purchase driver's license reader equipment from L-Tron Corporation of Victor, NY in the amount of \$1,900.62. 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 a proposal from Communication Systems Inc. in the amount of \$10,530.00 to furnish and install a new police camera server. 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 motion was made by Connely and seconded by Bowman to approve the lease/purchase of a 2019 Ford Explorer Police SUV with Community Leasing Partners Inc. The motion and second were rescinded.

Chairman Connely of the Public Safety Committee discussed implementing a pay scale for part-time Police Officers as follows: an officer working 1,000 hours of service would receive a rate of \$19.00 per hour; an officer working 5,000 hours of service would receive a rate of \$20.00 per hour; and the current rate is \$17.00 per hour. A motion was made by Connely and seconded by Linkevich to approve a pay scale for part-time Police Officers, that an officer working 1,000 hours of service would receive a rate of \$19.00 per hour and an officer working 5,000 hours of service would receive a rate of \$20.00 per hour. After some discussion, the motion and second were amended as follows: A recommendation was made to approve a pay scale for part-time Police Officers, that an officer working 1,000 hours of service would receive a rate of \$19.00 per hour and an officer working 5,000 hours of service would receive a rate of \$20.00 per hour and to be effective immediately. 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 Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Chairman Connely of the Public Safety Committee reported that three part-time officers have worked over 1,000 hours of service. A recommendation was made to approve a pay rate of \$19.00 per hour for part-time Officers Corey Herring, Tim Walsh and Ray Tonkinson, effective immediately. There was some discussion about the part-time officer budget being over budget from 2013 to 2016 and under budget for 2017. 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 lease/purchase of a 2019 Ford Explorer Police SUV at a cost not to exceed \$51,000.00 through the COSTARS program. 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 remove Mauch Chunk Street from the area where monthly parking meter permits are allowed. Council recognized Syed, owner of Mountain Tobacco located at 34 Mauch Chunk Street, who asked about his request that two parking spaces be designated as "15 Minute Parking Only". President Mace stated that it should be discussed later in the meeting. There was no one else 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 Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to move the Handicapped Loading/Unloading sign for Trinity United Church of Christ on Lafayette Street 20 feet west. There was some discussion about the wording on the current sign and that the wording was wrong. 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 Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Linkhorst and seconded by Cara to prohibit parking in front of the main entrance to Trinity United Church of Christ located at 22 Lafayette Street. After some discussion, the motion and second were amended as follows: A recommendation was made to advertise an ordinance to prohibit parking in front of the main entrance to Trinity United Church of Christ located at 22 Lafayette Street. There was much discussion about doing due diligence by looking at the situation at other churches before an ordinance is prepared. 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 Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Linkhorst and seconded by Cara to move the handicapped parking space for 215 Washington Street 20 feet north. After some discussion, the motion and second were amended as follows: A recommendation was made to move the handicapped parking space for 215 Washington Street to a new location to the north. 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.

Solicitor Greek arrived at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to advertise an ordinance establishing a stop intersection for southbound traffic on Swatara Street at the intersection with Van Gelder 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 Cara, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Linkhorst and seconded by Cara to advertise an ordinance making Hunter Street a northbound, one-way street between Spruce Street and West Broad Street. There was much discussion about this matter. Council recognized Mrs. McGrath, a resident of Hunter Street, who expressed her concerns that due to the current detour route Hunter Street has become a speedway. She also expressed her concerns

that making Hunter Street a northbound, one-way street would be an inconvenience. Council recognized Liz Pinkey of West Broad Street, who stated that traffic has moved onto Cottage Avenue during the detour. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion failed on a 3-4 roll call vote with Councilmembers Bowman, Connely, Linkevich and Mace opposed.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Linkhorst and seconded by Cara to advertise an ordinance making Hegarty Avenue an eastbound, one-way street between Nescopec Street and Berwick Street. There was much discussion about this matter. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion failed on a 1-6 roll call vote with Councilmembers Bowman, Connely, Evans, Linkevich, Linkhorst and Mace opposed.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Cara to maintain two-way traffic on Nescopec Street between West Broad Street and Hegarty Avenue. The motion died for lack of a second.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Cara and seconded by Connely to permanently prohibit parking on the west side of the 200 block of Washington Street. There was none one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion failed on a 3-4 roll call vote with Councilmembers Evans, Linkevich, Linkhorst and Mace opposed.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Zachary Lakitsky as a Water Treatment Plant Operator Trainee at a rate of \$21.21 per hour and with an effective start date no earlier than August 12, 2018. 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Austin Fogel as a Water Treatment Plant Operator Trainee at a rate of \$21.21 per hour and with an effective start date no earlier than August 13, 2018. 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 for window replacements at 255 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 Connely, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to change the existing roof line from flat to an A-frame design at 255 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 Connely, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to place a fence at 255 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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a motion was made by Cara and seconded by Bowman to purchase a municipal building sign from Pennsylvania Correctional Industries in the amount of \$858.50. After some discussion about the location of sign, obtaining sponsors for the sign, the sign would not be lit, revisions to the wording on the sign and eliminating the wording "Borough Building" from the sign, the motion and second were revised as follows: A recommendation was made to purchase a municipal building sign from Pennsylvania Correctional Industries for an amount not to exceed \$858.50. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this motion. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Chairman Cara of the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee reported on an article in the Hazleton Standard Speaker newspaper about chronic nuisance property complaints and a three-strike policy, and a proposed ordinance by the City of Hazleton addressing this matter. There was some discussion about this matter. A recommendation was made to refer the matter to the Public Safety Committee to review. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Evans, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a motion was made by Linkevich and seconded by Connely to hire James Akins as a part-time lifeguard at a pay rate of \$8.50 per hour. After some discussion, the motion and second were amended as follows: A recommendation was made to hire James Akins as a part-time lifeguard at a pay rate of \$8.50 per hour and retroactively effective to July 17, 2018. 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 unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a request from RUNegades Inc. of Collegetown, PA to hold a Half Marathon and 5k Run on April 14, 2019 starting at the Owl Creek Reservoirs. 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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace reported that he attended the Pennsylvania State Mayors' Association Conference in Lancaster and the Police Officers are all working hard.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Kathy Nunemacher of 322 Mahanoy Street expressed her concerns about the following: rotted trees on the north side of Mahanoy Street; borough owned properties; trimming trees; and a street sign that is coming down on Coal Street.

Alexis Pena of 513 Washington Street expressed his concerns about the condition of a property located at 517 Washington Street as follows: the property owner no longer resides in the house; thanked Councilman Cara and Mayor Gerace for their sense of urgency regarding this matter; code enforcement was contacted; the roof leaks; there are broken and open windows; cats and birds are inside the house; the property owner had been feeding the cats; the smell coming from the property; the property owner said the basement had been flooded and the walls collapsed; the

water has been shut off; he has water damage because a walkway between the properties has not been maintained; the chimney is bowing out to the exterior in the middle section and would eventually collapse damaging his property; he hired an exterminator to get rid of the termites he got from this property; the urgency and timeframe to demolish this property; and asked if anyone has been inside the house.

Kimberly Balogach of 525 Washington Street expressed her concerns about the condition of a property located at 523 Washington Street as follows: the property owner no longer resides in the house; the property is up for foreclosure; the door is wide open; there are strange people in and out of the house and it is not suppose to be occupied; someone emptied the refrigerator inside the house and dumped the food into the yard; there is trash outside; the smell is terrible; and code enforcement was contacted.

Manager Steigerwalt stated the property located at 523 Washington Street has been reported to code enforcement and he would check on the status. The police were called to a report of someone stripping copper from the house. Solicitor Greek stated that if the property appears to be abandoned, it can be boarded up within a reasonable amount of time.

President Mace recommended that the property located at 523 Washington Street be boarded and cleaned up. He stated that an inquiry was made to the County regarding the availability of demolition funds for 517 Washington Street, but was notified that all demolition funds had been allocated.

Councilman Cara added that he contacted the property owner of 517 Washington Street and she would not agree to let anyone inside the house. Sue Schaeffer of the Tamaqua Animal Rescue assisted him with trapping seven cats. He took the cats to the SPCA and gave them donations. He asked the property owner to shut off the electric power to the property and she did. The property owner said it is dangerous to go into the house.

There was much discussion about the property located at 517 Washington Street.

A recommendation was made to board up the property located at 517 Washington Street. Council recognized Michele Mehallic of 411 Lehigh Street who stated that if water is seeping into Mr. Pena's basement that something needs to be done. Council recognized Mr. Pena who stated that the property owner did not perform any maintenance on her home. 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 trap and remove the feral cats from the property located at 517 Washington Street. There was much 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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

There was some discussion about contacting code enforcement and if the house is unsecured code enforcement could enter the property.

Liz Pinkey of 237 West Broad Street expressed her concerns about code enforcement. Ms. Pinkey stated that her husband was cited for flaking paint on their porch in February. They contacted code enforcement to advise them that they were not able to correct the problem since the porch could not be painted in February. The matter would be taken care of when the weather permitted. Even though code enforcement was contacted, her husband received notices of a

\$200.00 fine and then in 60 days a \$500.00 fine, then in 90 days a warrant was issued for his arrest. They had been cooperating with code enforcement. Ms. Pinkey expressed her concerns about people dealing with code enforcement issues with properties for at least 20 years and the problems still exist. President Mace stated that Matt Meyers of Barry Isett and Associates was dealing with the code enforcement issues at the time and he no longer works for them.

Syed, owner of Mountain Tobacco located at 34 Mauch Chunk Street, discussed his request to designate two parking spaces as "15 Minute Parking Only". President Mace addressed the matter. No action was taken.

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

Under New Business, a recommendation was made to advertise for a full-time Code Enforcement position. 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.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss personnel 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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 9:41 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 10:18 p.m.

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

A recommendation was made to advertise for a part-time administrative office position. 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.

A recommendation was made to grant the office staff a one percent wage increase retroactively effective to January 1, 2018. 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.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:21 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

---

Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer