

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of December on Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 7:04 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Tamaqua Municipal Building, 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA.

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, Solicitor Anthony Odorizzi, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Trainee Tonia Collevichio and Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese.

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. A moment of silence was held for Charles Burrell, a long-time borough worker who recently passed away. The invocation was given by Councilman Connely followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Bowman. 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 November 16, 2021 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Bowman, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Christine Rottet stating that she is resigning her position from the Tamaqua Zoning Hearing Board effective immediately. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Christine Rottet from the Tamaqua Zoning Hearing Board effective immediately. 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 Thomas Nelson and James Connely, Zoning Officers, recommending the reappointment of Mark Conville to a three-year term on the Historic Architectural Review Commission (HARC). A recommendation was made to reappoint Mark Conville to a three-year term on HARC effective January 1, 2022. 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 Thomas Nelson and James Connely, Zoning Officers, recommending the reappointment of Mark Conville to a four-year term on the Tamaqua Planning Commission. A recommendation was made to reappoint Mark Conville to a four-year term on the Tamaqua Planning Commission, effective January 1, 2022. 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 Secretary/Treasurer Georgia DeWire informing borough council that the 2022 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) has been revised for the Police Employees Pension Plan and the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan. The revised 2022 MMO for the Police Employees Pension Plan is \$255,750 and the revised MMO for the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan is \$158,679. Secretary/Treasurer DeWire stated that Ronald H. Bittner, Senior Vice President, Managing director of Girard Pension Services provided

an explanation for the reduction of the MMOs as follows: the first versions of the 2022 MMO calculations were drafted using the 01/01/2019 Actuarial Valuation Report data; due to the significant increases in the investment markets in 2019 and 2020, the asset levels of both pension plans increased much faster than the liabilities over that same time period; this activity has generated an increase in the funded ratio of both plans, and has caused a corresponding decrease in the amount of future contributions needed to keep the plans properly funded, which will be reported in the 01/01/2021 Actuarial Valuation Reports; since those valuation results are now available, the Borough can take advantage of this improved funded status and update the 2022 MMO calculations using the 2021 data; this will reduce the Borough's contribution requirements for at least the next two years; and after discussing this information at the most recent Pension Board meeting, the Board decided to recommend using the current actuarial results for the revised 2022 MMO calculations. A recommendation was made to approve the revised 2022 certifications for the Police Employees Pension Plan and the Non-Uniformed Employees Pension Plan. Mayor Gerace stated that as discussed at the pension meeting, the Police Pension Plan should be in a good position in the next few years. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, and Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt discussed a resolution approving a price adjustment for bituminous materials for 2022. The following resolution was presented for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-15
PRICE ADJUSTMENT OF BITUMINOUS MATERIALS
FOR SMALL QUANTITIES**

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 Linkhorst, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that a bid opening for Street Materials would be held on December 16th.

Manager Steigerwalt discussed a resolution approving a demolition request to the County of Schuylkill in the amount of \$55,000.00 for the demolition of 35-37 North Railroad Street, Parcel Numbers 65-12-0127.000 and 65-12-0128.000 and the rehabilitation of the exposed wall and foundation of the adjoining structure. The following resolution was presented for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-16
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 Connelly, seconded by Linkevich, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the following: work on the Lincoln Street wall has been completed; 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 several sections of the Wabash Creek Culvert has been declined and he would reapply next year for the same amount and purpose.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on a revised budget summary and revised budget worksheets for the General Fund, Water Fund and Sewer Fund. The budget notes reflect changes that include the revised MMOs and the negotiated United Auto Workers (UAW) contract. Councilman Connely asked if there any updates regarding the reimbursement recalculation for the fire companies using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he received financial information from only one fire company and nothing from the others.

Under the Borough Manager's report, Councilman Connely discussed an issue where there are no crosswalk signals at the intersection of North Railroad and Elm streets.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported on the following: a Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) press release; a Christmas decoration press release; and a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Grants 101 Webinar.

Chief Hobbs requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss personnel matters.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to retain Andrew Seip as a full-time Patrolman 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 Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Memorandum of Agreement allowing 12-hour shifts for the Police Department on a temporary basis retroactive to November 26, 2021. 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 amend the agenda to include a motion to accept a Certified Eligibility List from the Tamaqua Civil Service Commission which is valid for a two-year period. 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 accept a Certified Eligibility List from the Tamaqua Civil Service Commission which is valid for a two-year period. 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 amend the agenda to include a motion to hire Douglas Springer as a full-time police officer, 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Douglas Springer as a full-time police officer, effective immediately. Councilman Bowman addressed the press and audience by adding that he is making it clear that this is being done by the book. 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, Officer Douglas Springer was sworn in by Mayor Gerace.

President Mace thanked the Civil Service Commission for their efforts.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Tyson Nalesnik as a full-time Chief Mechanic, effective on or before January 3, 2022. 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Collective Bargaining Agreement for UAW employees for the period of January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2025. 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.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to adopt the 2022 Budget. The summary of the proposed budget is as follows:

Proposed 2022 Budget Summary

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Estimated balance January 1, 2022 | \$ 5,843,500 |
| Estimated revenues | \$ 8,910,321 |
| Estimated expenditures | <u>\$ (9,428,555)</u> |
| Estimated balance December 31, 2022 | \$ 5,325,266 |

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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to adopt the 2022 Tax Ordinance setting the real estate tax rate at 23.50 mills with 21.90 mills for General Purposes, 1.0 mill for the Building and Equipment Fund, 0.50 mill for the Wabash Capital Improvement Fund and 0.10 mill for the Street Light Fund was presented for council’s consideration:

**ORDINANCE NO. 729
AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA,
COUNTY OF SCHUYLKILL, COMMONWEALTH OF
PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING THE TAX RATE
FOR THE YEAR 2022.**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Mills on Each Dollar of Assessed Valuation |
| Tax Rate for General Purposes | 21.90 Mills |
| Tax Rate for Building and Equipment Purposes | 1.00 Mill |
| Tax Rate for Wabash Improvement Fund Purposes | 0.50 Mill |
| Tax Rate for Street Light Fund Purposes | 0.10 Mill |
| Total | 23.50 Mills |

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing 2022 tax ordinance. 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 unanimous roll call vote.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to amend the agenda to include a motion to prepare and advertise an ordinance amending the pension ordinance to modify the defined benefit and define contribution benefits. 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to prepare and advertise an ordinance amending the pension ordinance to modify the defined benefit and define contribution benefits. 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 Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove and replace 14 vinyl windows with new higher quality vinyl windows at 221 West Rowe Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Hollenbach, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish 35-37 North Railroad Street. 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 Hollenbach, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace reported that there was a fantastic turnout for the Spirit of Christmas weekend.

Mayor Gerace stated that a constituent expressed concerns about a handicapped parking spot at the end of Patterson Street that is not being used. Mayor Gerace requested that the Parking and Traffic Committee look into the matter. There was some discussion about this matter.

Mayor Gerace requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss personnel matters.

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 matters.

Under New Business, a recommendation was made to advertise the schedule of regular meetings of Council, Boards, Commissions, Authorities and special committees for 2022. 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 hold an executive session to discuss real estate and personnel 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 7:40 p.m. while council met in executive session.

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

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

President Mace stated that a \$2 million grant was awarded to the Tamaqua Area Community Partnership for the construction of a new police station and community center through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. President Mace announced that in light of the grant a special ad-hoc committee consisting of Councilmembers Bowman, Connely and Linkevich would be involved with the project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:41 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