

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of March on Tuesday, March 16, 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/84385511356> and by entering Meeting ID 843 8551 1356. Individuals who did not have internet access were able to participate by telephone by dialing 1-929-436-2866 and entering Meeting ID 843 8551 1356#.

Present were Councilmembers Robert Amentler, Ronald Bowman, Brian Connely, Jay Hollenbach Jr., Mary Linkevich, and David Mace. Absent was Councilmember Ritchie Linkhorst. 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, 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 the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance would be waived. The roll was called with six councilmembers present and one absent.

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

Communication was received from Aimee Dotson, Office and Outreach Administrator, Tamaqua Chamber of Commerce, requesting permission to use the space across from the All-American Jeep dealership where the fire companies do training, for registration of the Tom Banditelli Memorial Trout Fishing Derby from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on May 1, 2021. The communication also requested use of the mail slot at the front of the borough building for drop off of pre-registrations for the Chamber to collect. 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 David J. Meredith, adjutant of the C.H. Berry Post No. 173 of The American Legion, requesting permission to tentatively hold the annual Memorial Day Parade on May 31, 2021 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 Debbie DeFranco, Secretary/Treasurer, Rush Township Board of Supervisors, stating that the Board would like to recommend Dave Ceci to be appointed as a representative for Rush Township to the Tamaqua Area Water Authority. A recommendation was made to appoint Dave Ceci as a representative of Rush Township to the Tamaqua Area Water Authority. 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 reported that he had a resolution extending the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency of March 20, 2020 for an additional thirty (30) day period to terminate on April 22, 2021 to present for council's consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-4
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. Councilman Connely asked if the extension of the declaration of disaster emergency makes the borough eligible for upcoming emergency funding. President Mace stated that the reason for the extension is to basically keep our feet in the door for emergency funding but that there is no guarantee. 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 approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on a new stimulus package referred to as the American Rescue Plan Act, which includes a direct disbursement to all municipalities.

Manager Steigerwalt also provided an update on the flood mitigation grant as follows: after discussing with the borough's engineer, the consensus is that the borough should apply for everything, or apply for everything but in a phased approach or a partial grant; an updated cost estimate for the total project is \$505,000, the required match for the grant is 15%; the borough could apply for the entire list of projects and still be under the maximum amount of the grant which is \$500,000; a cost estimate from the engineer for additional information/exhibits needed for the grant application; the grant application is due by the end of May; and adopting a resolution authorizing the submission of the application.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he is working on funding for demolition projects with hope that all of the properties on the list can be addressed.

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

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 116 Clay 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 623 Arlington 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness as requested by the Historic Architectural Review Commission for demolition of the rear wood addition at 320-322 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 Hollenbach, seconded by Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace asked council to consider the possibility of a borough resource to assist with grant writing for some of the grants that are out there now and worthwhile pursuing. President Mace asked Mayor Gerace to forward any information he receives about the grants to Manager Steigerwalt and/or Director of Community Development Calabrese for review.

Mayor Gerace also reported that he had a discussion with the new postmaster at the Tamaqua Post Office regarding the installation of a handicapped accessible ramp. There was some discussion about this matter.

Mayor Gerace also stated that he is in search of landlords that hold four or more rental properties within the borough limits that would be willing to share their knowledge and offer input for an upcoming project. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he would ask Christine Zamudio to reach out to him as she maintains a listing of rental properties which would include landlord information, number of units, etc. Manager Steigerwalt also suggested Mayor Gerace reach out to ABC Tamaqua Hi Rise, as they own a lot of properties in the borough.

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 legal matters.

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.

Under Unfinished Business, Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had an ordinance amending and restating the Borough's existing Floodplain Management Ordinance to present for council's consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. 722

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING AND RESTATING IN ITS ENTIRETY CHAPTER 164 ("FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT") OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, REQUIRING ALL PERSONS, PARTNERSHIPS, BUSINESSES AND CORPORATIONS TO OBTAIN A PERMIT FOR ANY CONSTRUCTION OR DEVELOPMENT; PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH PERMITS; SETTING FORTH CERTAIN MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AREAS OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO FLOODING; AND ESTABLISHING PENALTIES FOR ANY PERSONS WHO FAIL, OR REFUSE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OR PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDINANCE.

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing 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 Linkevich, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Under Unfinished Business, Solicitor Odorizzi reported that he had an ordinance approving amendment of the articles of incorporation of the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone Contracting Authority to present for council's consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. 723

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING AMENDMENT OF THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE TAMAQUA COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT ZONE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY ("AUTHORITY"), TO PROVIDE FOR UP TO NINE (9) MEMBERS ON THE BOARD OF THE AUTHORITY; AND AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATE OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE AND FILE ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA SECRETARY OF STATE, EFFECTING SUCH AMENDMENT.

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing 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 Linkevich, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Under Unfinished Business, Public Works Director Jones reported that he met with the Tamaqua School District and Kistler Transportation, and also spoke with Manager Steigerwalt and Councilman Linkhorst and is now ready to meet with the Parking and Traffic Committee to discuss changes being made to the snow emergency route and snow removal process.

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 Amentler, and unanimously approved with Councilman Hollenbach abstaining from voucher #V43243 and voucher #V43244.

Under New Business, a recommendation was made to send an official letter to the County requesting a detailed explanation as to why the Borough's COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant applications were not funded. 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 real estate 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 7:34 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:27 p.m.

Councilmembers Amentler, Connely and Hollenbach left for a fire call during the executive session.

President Mace announced that an executive session was held to discuss personnel and legal matters and that the meeting is being adjourned because there was no longer a quorum.

ATTEST:

Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer