

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of December on Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Tamaqua Municipal Building, 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA.

Present were Councilmembers Thomas Cara, Brian Connely, Micah Gursky, Kerry Lasky, David Mace and Justin Startzel. Councilmember R. Daniel Evans arrived later in the meeting. Officials present were Mayor Christian Morrison, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Solicitor Michael S. Greek, and Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire.

The meeting was called to order by President Gursky. The invocation was given by Councilman Cara followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Startzel. The roll was called with six councilmembers present and one absent.

The reading of the minutes of the last Regular Council Meeting held on November 17, 2015 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Mace, seconded by Startzel, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Linda Yulanavage of the Tamaqua Area Chamber of Commerce stating that the annual Santa Claus Parade is planned for December 4, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. The parade will assemble at the Borough Garage on East Broad Street and travel west on Broad to Depot Square Park. The sleigh will then proceed to the Tamaqua Community Art Center on Pine Street where they will greet the children. The communication also requested police and fire police assistance during the parade. 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 Mace, seconded by Lasky, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Brad A. Sanders of 419 Rolling Mill Avenue expressing an interest in serving as a member of Tamaqua Borough Council to fill the vacancy for the two-year term.

Communication was received from Kerry Lasky expressing an interest in serving as a member of Tamaqua Borough Council to fill the vacancy for the two-year term.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the following: the street sweeper is still running; the borough workers are hanging the wreaths and putting up the Christmas decorations; preparing bids for the 2016 street materials; and a structural inspection report of the Wabash Creek Culvert Upper and Lower Sections prepared by Alfred Benesch and Company.

Mayor Morrison reported on parking issues that created access problems for fire trucks during a recent fire on Orwigsburg Street. Mayor Morrison requested that Parking and Traffic look into this matter. There was some discussion about this matter.

Mayor Morrison also reported on the following: part-time police officers and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) requirements for the number of hours worked for part-time employees; and the Police Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) and the police pension plan.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Herbert Curvey of 118 Clay Street asked about the status of a wall that was torn down on West Street between Clay and Union streets and where the person dumped the remnants of the wall is blocking the street. Mr. Curvey stated that he complained about this matter at a council meeting a few months ago. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the Code Enforcement Department has sent notices of violations but has not been able to contact the property owner.

Thomas Schlorf of 223 Orwigsburg Street complained about the placement of a handicapped sign creating a parking space that is 27 feet long. After some discussion about this matter, President Gursky referred the matter to the Parking and Traffic Committee for review.

Mr. Schlorf thanked councilmembers for approving the purchase of radios for the Fire Department.

Ronald Bowman of 229 Spruce Street also thanked councilmembers for the radios and to take note how blessed we are in town for the Fire Department service that we have.

Debra Althouse of 406 Pitt Street thanked the borough for fixing the potholes in the streets.

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

Under Unfinished Business, a recommendation was made to adopt the 2016 Budget. The summary of the proposed budget is as follows:

Proposed 2016 Budget Summary

Estimated balance January 1, 2016	\$ 2,725,500
Estimated revenues	\$ 8,375,727
Estimated expenditures	<u>\$(8,734,612)</u>
Estimated balance December 31, 2016	\$ 2,366,615

President Gursky stated that a meeting was held with representatives from the United Autoworkers Local 1612 (UAW) to discuss health insurance and health insurance costs. President Gursky stated that there is a steep increase in health insurance premium costs of approximately eight percent. 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 Startzel, and unanimously approved.

Under Unfinished Business, the 2016 Tax Ordinance fixing the real estate tax rate at 18.25 mills for General Purposes and 1.50 mills for the Building and Equipment Fund was presented for council’s consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. 680
AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA,
COUNTY OF SCHUYLKILL, COMMONWEALTH OF
PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING THE TAX RATE
FOR THE YEAR 2016.

	Mills on Each Dollar of Assessed Valuation
Tax rate for General Purposes	18.25 Mills
Tax Rate for Building and Equipment Purposes	1.50 Mills
Total	19.75 Mills

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing 2016 tax ordinance. Council recognized Debra Althouse who asked if the total tax rate is obtained by adding the two numbers together. 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 Lasky, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Under New Business, a recommendation was made to name ETA Benefits Inc. as the borough’s Producer/Broker of Record and to authorize the appropriate officials to execute a Producer of Record Agreement. 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 Mace, and unanimously approved.

Under New Business, a recommendation was made to authorize the appropriate officials to execute a Rescinding Prior Producer of Record Designation Letter rescinding the borough's prior designation of Higgins Insurance Agency as Producer of Record. 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 Mace, and unanimously approved.

Under New Business, there was much discussion about the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program as follows: how the CDBG loans are structured; the loan program depends on the number of people in the household and their income; the status of collections on loan payments; how the loan values are determined in relation to the repairs being requested; the loan amount versus the value of the home; addressing code violations; a good collection rate on loan payments; if the borough should continue the program; less loans are being made; and Manager Steigerwalt will provide loan information regarding terms, delinquency and loan status.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss 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 Mace, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 7:34 p.m. while council met in executive session.

Councilman Evans arrived at approximately 7:35 p.m. during the executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 7:59 p.m.

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

There was some discussion about damage to a pedestrian pole at the Five Points intersection by a truck and installing a bollard to protect the pole. Manager Steigerwalt will have Public Works Director Jones look into the matter and come back with his recommendations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:04 p.m. on motion of Mace, seconded by Connely, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer