

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of December on Tuesday, December 6, 2016 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, R. Daniel Evans, Micah Gursky, Kerry Lasky and David Mace. Absent was Councilmember Brian Connelly. Officials present were Mayor Christian Morrison, Chief of Police Richard Weaver, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Solicitor Michael S. Greek and Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire.

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 Bowman. 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 15, 2016 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 Donna Plasko, office coordinator, stating that the staff at St. John XXIII Parish is requesting a streetlight be placed on Swatara Street at the bottom of the Iron Steps. There was some discussion about this matter. A recommendation was made to grant the request and place a streetlight at the base of the Iron Steps on Swatara 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 Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt discussed a resolution approving a price adjustment for bituminous materials for 2017. The following resolution was presented for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2016-15  
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 Gursky, seconded by Bowman, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt stated that a bid opening for Street Materials would be held on December 15, 2016 at 2 p.m. and there was one significant change to the bid requirements. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the PennDOT representative has instructed the borough to go to a warm mix instead of the hot mix for pothole patching. Councilman Bowman expressed his concerns as follows: how the warm mix would perform; PennDOT would eventually want to eliminate hot mix; a need to have enough patching ready or the borough would be wasting a lot of material; the temperature of the patching material does not give the borough a lot of leeway as the temperature would decrease during the travel time from the pick-up place; the borough would need to get a bigger quantity and a place to use it; and the borough is being forced into making this change. Councilman Gursky recommended including both warm mix and hot mix in the bid requirements.

Manager Steigerwalt discussed a resolution authorizing participation in the Municipal Risk Management Workers' Compensation Pooled Trust. The following resolution was presented for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2016-16  
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE MUNICIPAL RISK  
MANAGEMENT WORKERS' COMPENSATION POOLED TRUST.**

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 Evans, seconded by Bowman, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the Streetscape Project on Center Street and the pending Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) applications. There was much discussion about the following: PennDOT is looking for a letter of intent from the borough approving the elimination of all or part of the parking needed in that area for the driveway permits; there are four HOP applications but one of the applications may not be approved; the engineer provided the borough with a drawing; what the alternatives are for parking in that area; the site distance needed for the driveways; a decision by borough council was pending PennDOT’s review of the HOP applications; the Streetscape project dies if the borough does not approve the elimination of parking; approximately a half-dozen residents would lose parking in that area; what is the deadline; there are handicapped people living in that area that would lose parking; referring the matter to the Parking and Traffic Committee; and if the residents in the area are aware that the parking would be eliminated. A motion was made by Cara to send a letter of intent to PennDOT stating that the borough would eliminate the parking that is needed for the driveway permits. The motion died for lack of a second. There was some discussion about the HOP applicants and that people living in that area are not aware of how their parking would be impacted. A motion was made by Cara and seconded by Gursky to send a letter of intent to PennDOT stating that the borough would eliminate the parking that is needed for the driveway permits. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion failed on a 2-4 roll call vote with Councilmembers Bowman, Evans, Lasky and Mace opposed. Mayor Morrison recommended talking to Sean Hegarty who owns property in that area. The Parking and Traffic Committee would look into Mayor Morrison’s recommendation.

Manager Steigerwalt gave an update on the Code Enforcement evaluation on a property at 21 North Greenwood Street.

Director of Community Development Mary Linkevich reported on the following: using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Fiscal Year 2013 funds for rehabilitation, instead of construction, of the Bungalow Pool bathhouse project; and to have an engineer review a demolition property at 216 Penn Street. A recommendation was made to proceed with requesting permission from the state to modify the project from construction to rehabilitation of the Bungalow Pool bathhouses using CDBG Program Fiscal Year 2013 funds. There was no one from the floor wishing to address this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Lasky, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to adopt the 2017 Budget. The summary of the proposed budget is as follows:

Proposed 2017 Budget Summary

Estimated balance January 1, 2017	\$ 3,120,755
Estimated revenues	\$ 10,716,146
Estimated expenditures	<u>\$(10,718,372)</u>
Estimated balance December 31, 2017	\$ 3,118,529

Mayor Morrison expressed his concerns about the following: when he came into office, the real estate tax rate was at 12 mills; the rising costs of running a community; keeping a significant police force; other than the development of new homes in Owl Creek, how does the borough stop

the bleeding and generate some income; what ways can we find to put income into the community; it may lead to more vacant homes; struggling with a tax increase; and trying to have the staff work in a red budget. Councilman Bowman expressed his concerns as follows: the comments he made at the last meeting; neighbors who are 70 years old driving a school bus to try and make ends meet; the money is not here and will not be here; each year the borough will have less people contributing. Councilman Gursky discussed the following: other small towns face similar struggles; the next year's budget includes the hiring of two new police officers; the need to fix the infrastructure; and the value of a mill has consistently gone up but does not keep up with expenses. Council recognized Bob Knepper of 253 Brown Street who expressed his concerns about the following: the budget has been a continuing problem and that former councils knew about the issues; recommended layoffs of borough workers; wages, salaries and benefits are ballooning; we have plenty of police; the number of borough vehicles; ways to tweak the budget; if the borough saw a savings in the last two years when fuel prices were significantly lower; if the borough received a reimbursement for expenses from last year's storm; a sewer rate increase; a comparison of the borough's real estate taxes versus other municipalities; if we continue to raise taxes this town will be found less desirable to people; two people in a plow truck; and he opposes the two mill tax increase. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the budget has been reviewed many times and tweaked as much as possible. Councilman Evans responded as follows: the borough workforce has been reduced considerably over the years; the street and water departments have six employees each; every department has seen a decrease in the number of employees and the number is lower than it was in the years of 1990 and 2000.

Mayor Morrison left the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

There was much discussion about this matter. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Cara, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, the 2017 Tax Ordinance setting the real estate tax rate at 21.75 mills with 20.25 mills for General Purposes, 1.0 mill for the Building and Equipment Fund and 0.50 mill for the Wabash Capital Improvement Fund was presented for council's consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. 690  
 AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA,  
 COUNTY OF SCHUYLKILL, COMMONWEALTH OF  
 PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING THE TAX RATE  
 FOR THE YEAR 2017.

	Mills on Each Dollar of Assessed Valuation
Tax rate for General Purposes	20.25 Mills
Tax Rate for Building and Equipment Purposes	1.00 Mill
Tax Rate for Wabash Improvement Fund Purposes	0.50 Mill
Total	21.75 Mills

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing 2017 tax ordinance. Council recognized Bob Knepper who stated that he hopes council understands his concerns and thanked council for listening to him. There was no one else from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Cara, and approved by a 5-1 roll call vote with Councilman Bowman opposed.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a chimney at the rear of 204 West Cottage Avenue. Council recognized Bob Knepper who started discussing having the borough work crew install a new roof for a different property. President Mace stated that there is a motion on the floor and his discussion is not related to the motion but that he would be able to address his concerns 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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a motion was made by Cara and seconded by Bowman to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for repairs and rehabilitation to the United States Post Office at 339 East Broad Street. There was some discussion about the Historical Architectural Review Commission's request for a completed application from the United States Postal Service. A motion was made by Gursky, and seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved to table the pending motion until a completed application is received.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Bob Knepper of 253 Brown Street discussed having the borough work crew take on small projects such as the Bungalow Pavilion roof. There was some discussion about this matter.

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

Under New Business, a recommendation was made to sell the vacant lot at 240 Center Street at a public auction and to set the starting bid at \$25,000. 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 Lasky, and unanimously approved.

Under New Business, Councilman Cara discussed the new statement format of the utility bills, the utility service charge and a way to designate which utility service is being billed for. There was some discussion about this matter.

Under New Business, Councilman Cara also discussed looking at the sidewalks and curbing along Spruce Street.

Under New Business, Councilman Evans discussed a letter from William G. Schwab of William G. Schwab and Associates, stating he is the Chapter 7 Trustee for Apartments and Acquisitions L.P. which is the entity that owns a property at 216 Pitt Street. Attorney Schwab asked if the borough desires to purchase this property. There was some discussion about this matter. A recommendation was made to send a letter to Attorney William G. Schwab advising him that the borough has no interest in acquiring 216 Pitt Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Gursky, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Cara, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer