

BOROUGH OF TATAMY – OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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2020 – The Year in Review

Neighbors and Friends ... Happy New Year! I'm sure you're as happy as I am to bid a good riddance to the year that was 2020. It would seem that a good way to sum it up in just a few words would be "COVID-19; and Cancelled". That said, believe it or not, we accomplished quite a bit despite the pandemic. So, better late than never at all, I wanted to share and celebrate some of our accomplishments of the past year, and once again acknowledge those who truly get the work done, because without our dedicated staff, none of this would have been possible.

COVID-19: As a government entity, we are required to have documented Continuity of Government and Operational Contingency and Emergency Plans in place in the event of an emergency. That said, none of us ever expected to have to change our entire operational structure. I would like to thank everyone for their assistance and flexibility as we continue to navigate through the ever-changing requirements. Of course, the business shift requirements that COVID dictated came with some unanticipated expenses as we needed to procure Zoom conference licenses, additional technology upgrades to allow our staff and officials to conduct business remotely, special cleaning products, PPE, etc. Thanks to our partners at Northampton County, we were able to obtain several grants to cover these unanticipated expenses through funding provided by the CARES act.

Office Staff: Not even a global pandemic will stop our dedicated office staff from continuing their mission to ensure our residents are taken care of. In early March our entire operation was turned upside down by the COVID pandemic ... but our office staff didn't miss a beat. In a matter of hours, work schedules were adjusted, office hours and operational procedures were changed (e.g., the office would be 'closed' but appointments for assistance were available if needed, etc.). Deanne and Nancy didn't miss a beat and, while certain changes are admittedly inconvenient, our operation continued uninterrupted. Kudos to them for keeping all of us organized and running like a well oiled machine.

Bushkill Street Bridge: Perhaps our most notable accomplishment this year was the long awaited completion of the Bushkill Street Bridge. This project was started in April of 2019, with initial estimates to completion of six to eight weeks. After months of inaction by the contractor following contract disputes with Northampton County and the General Purpose Authority, the project was finally completed and bridge was opened in late July of 2020.

Public Works: Once again Ryan McGinley and his Public Works crew knocked it out of the park this year. Ryan, Frank and Tyler have been going non-stop to ensure that we are prepared for whatever comes our way. Some of our notable accomplishments this year include:

- **Equipment Upgrades:** We had several pieces of equipment in our inventory that were either outdated, broken or no longer useful to us. These items were sold off and the proceeds were used to purchase some new (to us, anyway) equipment that was desperately needed but never in the budget. Some of these items include but aren't limited to:
 - Caterpillar Skid steer loader that, according to Ryan, is "used for everything"
 - Heavy duty utility trailer
 - Ingersoll Rand vibrating drum roller (for road paving and patch work)
- **Municipal Building Exterior Lighting Upgrades:** The lighting at the front of the Municipal Building and our Doughboy Monument was upgraded this year. All the old wiring and fixtures were no longer operational, and they were removed and replaced with updated wiring and energy efficient LED fixtures. We also added two LED fixtures to our bell tower and installed a new LED spotlight on our flagpole.
- **Stormwater Swale – North Tatamy:** One of the projects on our "list" for what seemed like forever was to reconstruct the stormwater swale that conveys virtually all the stormwater from North Tatamy to the Bushkill Creek. This swale was put in place many years ago and fell into major disrepair. Until this year, we didn't have the proper equipment to enable us to make the repairs. The repairs were finally completed earlier this summer and, after several setbacks and rainstorms that required multiple resets and lots of re-work, we are finally happy to have this project off our list and completed.

- **Braden Park Upgrades:** The picnic pavilion was cleaned and, for the first time since it was installed many years ago, it was completely repainted, along with all the tables and benches. The garages at the ball field were cleaned out ... unused equipment was either thrown away, donated or sold off.
- **Hurricane Isais:** Back on August 4th, a storm with a name that no one could pronounce correctly came calling, dropping more than six inches of rain on the Borough in less than 12-hours. Needless to say, that much rain in that short amount of time brought with it major flooding in the lower end of town as the Bushkill Creek rushed over its banks. Ryan and his crew had their work cut out for them, spending weeks repairing the damage that resulted from the flooding. Some of that included:
 - Picnic tables from the pavilion needed to be recovered, cleaned and re-set
 - Fencing needed to be removed and replaced
 - The pavilion at Braden Park needed to be cleaned
 - Mulch needed to be replaced
 - Drains needed to be cleared
 - Numerous potholes along Bushkill Street needed to be filled
- **Road Salt Storage Bin:** In last year's year-end summary, I mentioned that we had constructed a temporary road salt storage facility adjacent to our municipal garage, and that we had identified a permanent location and would be constructing that in 2020. Well ... this past October we finally finished it. This project is one more step toward my directive at becoming self-sufficient. Prior to this facility being built, Tatamy's road salt supply was stored (and co-mingled) at the Upper Nazareth Township Public Works facility. We never had regular access to that facility so if we ever needed salt off hours, it has been difficult at times to get someone to open the gates for us. We are now able to control our own salt / cinder supply and it's available to us at any time when its needed. There are a few finishing items that we will be taking care of in the spring to "pretty it up" ... this will include a fence or a gate of some type to prevent unauthorized access. This project was completed with in-house labor and funded through the sale of unused and outdated equipment (referenced above).
- **Municipal Building Updates:** We have started some long overdue projects to update our Municipal Building. These include:
 - Painting and preservation of the hallways and office spaces
 - Upgrading the 1st floor restroom to allow for ADA accessibility

Police Department. COVID-19 certainly didn't stop our police department in 2020. For 2020, our local coverage averaged 70%. This is up from 68% in 2019 and is the highest local coverage Tatamy has ever experienced. We will continue this trend in the months ahead as our goal is to get as close to 100% as possible, while working within the constraints of our budget.

Fire Company: Our Volunteer Firefighters answered the call for help 48 times in 2020. Thankfully everyone has come back to the station and gone home safely. I would like to thank all our Firefighters for their continued support and dedication serving our community. Our Fire Company is always looking for volunteers. If you're interested in learning more, please contact our Fire Chief or stop down at the Fire House any Monday night.

Events: One word sums it all up ... COVID-19. Sadly, most of our events had to be cancelled this year due to the pandemic and restrictions on large gatherings. We were, however, able to sneak in one small event this year, and that was rededicating the Tatamy Trail in honor of our former Mayor, Luke Duignam early in October. Mayor Luke worked tirelessly to ensure the success and implementation of our Trail. None of what we have today would be possible without his leadership and management of that project. Members of the Duignam family, along with State Representative Joe Emrick and folks from Senator Lisa Boscola's office were on hand to cut the ribbon and re-dedicate the trail in Luke's memory.

In Memoriam: Sadly, we had to say "goodbye" to the following who passed away in 2020. These folks served our community for many years:

- **Stuart Albert:** Stu dedicated his life to making Tatamy a better place and there just aren't enough ways to thank him for all his years of service to the community. Practically everything we have today can be attributed, in some way, to Stu. He served 20-years on Borough Council, he also served on the Athletic Association, and was a Life Member of the Tatamy Fire Company. Stu passed away in January following a long illness.

- **Bill Belkey:** This past December, after serving 24-years on Borough Council, Bill decided it was time for him to retire. In addition to his service on Council, he also was a Life Member of the Tatamy Fire Company and served for many years on the Tatamy Athletic Association. Bill passed away in December following a short illness.
- **Mike Racz:** After fighting cancer for several years, Mike passed away in November. He served on Borough Council for 16-years.

In closing, I'd like to thank all of you for your continued support of our community. Although we still are faced with multiple challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I am hopeful that we are able to turn the corner on this soon and life returns to 'normal', whatever that will be remains to be seen. It has, and continues to be, an honor to be your Mayor.

Regards,



Christopher Moren
Mayor, Tatamy Borough