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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CLARION BOROUGH STORMWATER AUTHORITY TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING JULY 17

The Clarion Borough Stormwater Authority will present its initial plans for rebuilding the borough's stormwater facilities while keeping the cost to citizens equitable and low.

The Authority will hold a public meeting at 7 p.m. July 17 in the Senior Center at 516 Main Street.

Authority board members and borough officials will outline the immediate and longer-term needs of the stormwater system, present a new way to finance needed improvements, and take questions and comments from borough citizens.

Much of Clarion Borough's stormwater drains and pipes were built in the 1930s and are now rusting, disintegrating and collapsing. The borough faces a serious challenge to repair and replace its deteriorating stormwater systems.

Replacing a major stormwater line on Center Place is estimated to cost \$1.9 million. Additional projects in all parts of the borough could push the total to \$6 million over five years.

The Stormwater Authority proposes to raise funds through a stormwater fee. All property owners, even if tax-exempt, would pay a fee based on the amount of impervious area – roof and pavements – on the property. Governments and non-profit organizations will be required to pay this fee, spreading the costs more equitably and reducing the burden on residential and commercial property owners.

Around 70 percent of the assessed value of properties in the borough is non-taxable – owned by tax-exempt governments and non-profits. Nearly a third of the impervious areas contributing to the borough's stormwater burden are owned by these tax-exempt properties.

Requiring tax-exempt property owners to help pay for stormwater management costs will reduce the financial burden on residential property owners. Paying for needed stormwater improvements with property taxes would require an increase of around 13 mills.

Estimates are preliminary as budgets are not final, but residential property owners would pay almost twice as much in property taxes for stormwater improvements as they would with a stormwater fee.

Without much-needed repairs to the stormwater system, homes and businesses in the borough could see more flooded yards and basements, more flooded streets creating traffic hazards, and more erosion and damage to land and infrastructure.

"It's a serious problem," said Authority Chairman Jason Noto. "We have to address it and it will cost a lot, but we feel the stormwater fee is the best, fairest way to pay for it."

More information is available on the Clarion Borough website at www.clarionboro.org and on Facebook by searching for Clarion Borough Stormwater Authority.

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