

July 6, 2021, Council Meeting
Minutes

The regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on July 6, 2021, as advertised, in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library. President Lapinto called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers present were Mr. Garbarino, Dr. Sanders Dédé, Mr. Aaron, Mr. MacBeth, Ms. Logue, and President Lapinto. Ms. Roberts was absent. Solicitor Marshall, Mr. Preston, Mayor Whitling, Mr. Sharrar, Mr. Colosimo, Chief Peck, and Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present. Ms. Schwabenbauer was absent.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth to amend the agenda to include an Executive Session for personnel under Public Safety that will include Council, the Mayor, Secretary LaVan-Preston, Chief Peck, and Solicitor Marshall. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Dr. Sanders Dédé with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the June 1, 2021, Council Meeting, minutes, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Dr. Sanders Dédé with a second by Mr. MacBeth to approve the June 15, 2021, Council Meeting, minutes. The motion carried with a vote of five yea with President Lapinto abstaining as she was absent from that meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items

There was none.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Dr. Sanders Dédé, approving the appropriations for the month of July, was carried with a vote of six yea.

President Lapinto stated the Treasurer's Report and Budget Analysis are in the packet for Council's review.

President Lapinto announced the second Council Meeting will be held July 20, 2021, at 7 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library, if needed.

On a motion by Mr. MacBeth with a second by Mr. Aaron to approve the Clarion Area Sports Boosters' ceremonial bonfire to be held August 26, 2021, from 7-9:30 p.m., subject to COVID-19 Warning and following CDC guidelines in place at the time of the event and conditioned as in past with the Clarion Fire Department's assistance. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth, approving Wreaths Across America Ceremony and Riderless Horse special event request to be held December 18, 2021, from Noon

to 12:30 p.m. at the 2nd Avenue Cemetery, subject to the COVID-19 Warning and following CDC guidelines in place at the time of the event, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, approving C-93 and United Way of Clarion County's special event request for Bluegrass event to be held August 6, 2021, (6 p.m. until 10 p.m.) and August 7, 2021, (1 p.m. until evening) on Sixth Avenue from Main Street to Wood Street and August 8, 2021, (morning time) in the Clarion County Memorial Park, subject to COVID-19 Warning and following CDC guidelines in place at the time of the event, was carried with a vote of six yea.

President Lapinto stated Council needs to table the Borough-County CDBG Administration Agreements as they are not ready to be approved yet.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Aaron to table to approve Borough-County CDBG Administration Agreements 2018, 2019, and 2020. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Logue to give permission to increase the business grants for CARES – CDBG Funding from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

President Lapinto asked Kristi Amato, Director of Clarion County Department of Planning and Development, to explain what this actually means. This is part of the \$60,000 CARES money but is through CDBG.

Ms. Kristi Amato reported all of the entitlements, Clarion County, Clarion Township, and Clarion Borough in this case, received Community Development Block Grant for Coronavirus, CDBG-CV funds. Every year, the Borough receives an allotment for CDBG for whatever projects Council wishes to use it for. Ms. Amato commented this was a special allotment that the Borough received in a response to Coronavirus. When the application was prepared, one of the projects was to do a Small Business Grant Assistance program with part of the Borough's funds. At that time, the maximum allotment was \$5,000 per applicant. Ms. Amato stated the idea is to increase that to a maximum of \$10,000 for each. This would be the Borough's entitlement. Ms. Amato also will be meeting with the township and the County to do the same. Increasing the amount a little bit would make more of an impact for the businesses.

President Lapinto asked how a business would qualify?

As these are federal funds coming through the State government, Ms. Amato pointed out the paperwork is a lot of fun. An application was created for it based off DCED's example. One of the main things that needs looked at is that the money is going to benefit a low-to-moderate person or family. That is one of the CDBG requirements that was not lifted for this protocol. When a business applies for this funding, Ms. Amato reported it has to benefit a job, either to create a job or retain a job that will be filled by a low-to-moderate income person. Not only does that need to be documented as meeting the guidelines for the grant, but it has to be

documented that the business will be able to carry this position on. It's not just a matter of giving the funding to a business that will not be financially feasible to award it to. Ms. Amato stated the process would basically be as follows: the application would come to the County, the County would review it to make sure it meets the CDBG guidelines, and then the list of those applicants looking for Borough funds would be given to Borough Council for approval of the funding. The County will work with either the Economic Development Corporation or the Small Business Development Center to review the business aspect of the applicant before passing it on.

If the Borough gets this money, Dr. Sanders Dédé asked if the Borough can just use it for something or if it has to be disbursed to a business?

Ms. Amato commented it would have to go to a beneficiary of the Borough. This is a small business grant where Borough businesses can apply to receive these funds to operate.

Dr. Sanders Dédé doesn't understand why the Borough has to apply to the County and then the funds come back to the Borough?

Ms. Amato stated the Borough is an entitlement community, which the Community Development Block Grant is handled through the County and then the funds are funneled to the communities.

Ms. Logue added this is DCED's rules not the County's.

President Lapinto reminded Council that a certain amount of the funds were set aside for a fire company project as well and asked Mr. Colosimo how much that was?

Mr. Colosimo informed Council about \$17,000, which was under urgent needs.

President Lapinto asked if a news release will be published so businesses are aware this is available?

Ms. Amato agreed and all entities will help draft the information and get it out to the public.

President Lapinto noted a business would not be able to do much for \$5,000

Dr. Sanders Dédé doesn't think \$10,000 will either.

Ms. Logue understands the Borough will have the option to award up to \$10,000 maximum per business or less if that is the case.

Ms. Amato confirmed that is correct. The Borough could award 4 \$10,000 grants or if there are more than 4 it would be up to Council to decide how to address what business would get what amount.

Regarding the funds, Mr. Garbarino inquired if this funding is truly set aside for small businesses with 20-30 employees or if the University could get it?

Ms. Amato reported the guidelines stipulate it has to be a for-profit business, no more than 100 employees, and annual revenue up to \$1 million.

If it's going to be used by a business to either keep a low-to-moderate income person or hire one, Mr. Jim Crooks thinks this will be the challenge of finding out how to ask your current or potential employees about his/her income. It will be a laborious task.

When the County is qualifying the business, Ms. Amato stated you can do it so that it equals based on the money that he/she has available for each of the applicants. The business can hire up to 4 part-time and based on the wage that he/she would be earning as a part-time employee, then it would go toward qualifying them for that \$10,000. Ms. Amato feels the complication is really going to be verifying duplication of benefits. In other words, if a business received \$10,000 to buy XYZ from one of the other funding sources, then the business cannot come to the County for this business grant to get that money back. Low-to-moderate income is a little tricky, but the trickier part is going to be the duplicate benefit.

Mr. Crooks asked if that means PPP?

Ms. Amato agreed. If a business used PPP for wages up until March of this year but still needs help because he/she is struggling, up to \$10,000 could be awarded, if chosen, to help the business from May to July. That would not be duplication. It will need determined what each business has already received and what that was used for before moving the application on.

Whenever the Borough was sectioned off to be qualified for CDBG, Mayor Whitling inquired if that affects this at all?

If Mayor Whitling is referring to census tract, Ms. Amato commented that doesn't really affect this at all as the County will be looking at the applicant itself. Since Sixth Avenue is a whole census tract with a 51% LMI, if someone owned a grocery store there that benefitted just the people in that census tract, Ms. Amato stated that would do it.

Mr. Colosimo commented it would need demonstrated that that block group or business is the primary main beneficiary. That's exactly how South Sixth Avenue was qualified for the use of CDBG funds.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Dr. Sanders Dédé to give permission for Todd Colosimo to complete a change order to purchase remaining number of banner arms for the Main Street CDBG Project in the amount of \$8,496.

Mr. Aaron asked Mr. Colosimo for an explanation on why the Borough is spending this money for materials that should have already been included.

Mr. Colosimo stated the vendor mistook the text on an item and basically only bid half of what was needed. The language in the bid form was not clear enough to allow the vendor to understand the amount necessary. This is the remaining number of banner arms necessary at the unit price included in the bid.

President Lapinto noted this was discussed with the Solicitor as well.

Solicitor Marshall agreed and understands the Borough has had a good long-term relationship with the supplier. The cost to try to force the contract with that amount may not be worth doing a contract with and of itself.

Mr. Colosimo contacted DCED and the grant manager is okay with a change order.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE

Dr. Sanders Dédé thanked the public for attending the public meeting held for questions and/or comments on the Neighborhood Park. The Committee continues to move forward. Today, the Committee signed agreement papers to get the initial work started on the storm water plan for that property.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN

Mr. Crooks commented the Committee had a good meeting. A lot of positive comments on the flowers and how they are growing have been received. As for the empty hole in front of his store, Mr. Crooks stated an electrician re-routed the electrical outlet. Tomorrow, the tree will be planted. So, this is good news. Mr. Crooks reported the Committee is working towards Christmas. The community support with funding has been really amazing. The group would like to restore some of the wreaths and place those at the corners of 7th, 6th, 5th, and hopefully, 4th on the decorative street light poles. Mr. Crooks hopes the new poles will be up by then. Snowflakes will be on the other poles. Mr. Crooks stated the Destination Clarion Downtown members really appreciate all the support Clarion Borough gives. Walking up and down Main Street, Mr. Crooks feels there is so much that could be done.

Mr. Garbarino stated the flowers look good and questioned if sunflowers were planted, too?

Mr. Crooks commented some were beginning to grow in the planters but were pulled. CRB has sunflowers in their planters.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. MacBeth reported the cost for 2021 Clean-Up Day were included in the packet and was \$1,096.80, which is not only cheaper than last year but the cheapest day in the last 8 or 9 years.

STORMWATER AUTHORITY

Mr. Aaron had nothing to report at this time.

PUBLIC SAFETY

President Lapinto called for an Executive Session for personnel, including Councilmembers, Mayor Whitling, Solicitor Marshall, Chief Peck, and Secretary LaVan-Preston, beginning at 7:29 p.m.

President Lapinto called the meeting back to order at 7:39 p.m. and turned it over to Mr. Aaron.

Following the order on the agenda, on a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Logue to adopt Ordinance #2021-836, an Ordinance amending the Traffic Ordinance.

President Lapinto reminded everyone this is to allow parking on part of Eighth Avenue as requested by the residents.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth, giving permission to hire a probationary police officer Ms. Brittaney Gray at the starting base wage of \$20.40 per hour (70% of base rate), contingent upon passing the psychological exam and physical exam.

President Lapinto asked Chief Peck for any comments?

Chief Peck stated she was number 1 on the eligibility list and this is his recommendation. Also, a thank you to the Civil Service Commission. This was a long process, but it all came together. Chief Peck appreciates all their help.

President Lapinto pointed out this is the officer that the Borough has been trying to replace for 2 years.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Logue, approving an agreement with Clarion County for parking passes for Liberty Street Municipal Parking Lot for a 3-year period, was carried with a vote of six yea.

LIBRARY BOARD

Mayor Whitling had nothing to report.

HOUSING AND ZONING

Ms. Logue stated the Housing and Zoning Report is included in the packet for everyone's review.

RECREATION

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth, giving permission to bid the PAW Park Safety Improvements Project upon completion of cost estimate/design and specifications by the EADS Group, was carried with a vote of six yea.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary LaVan-Preston commented the application to request the American Rescue Funds was completed. The money has not been received yet. However, the bank account is set up. The Borough is working with the financial consultant to see how to use the funds.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Whitling thanked all the different groups that came to the I Love Clarion event uptown. Working one of the booths for a few hours in the morning, it was a pleasant surprise to see how many people were out walking around Clarion. Also, Mayor Whitling thanked the Clarion Fire & Hose Company for being at the fireworks to make sure everything was safe.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Elisabeth Fulmer commented trees.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino, the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Borough Secretary