

June 1, 2021, Council Meeting
Minutes

The regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on June 1, 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, Ms. Roberts, Dr. Sanders Dédé, Mr. Aaron, Mr. MacBeth, Ms. Logue, and President Lapinto. 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 Ms. Roberts, approving the May 4, 2021, Council Meeting, minutes, was carried with a vote of seven yea.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items

There was none.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Mr. Aaron, approving the appropriations for the month of June, was carried with a vote of seven 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 June 15, 2021, at 7 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library, if necessary.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth to approve the United Way of Clarion County's special event request for 5K and 10K Race to be held September 25, 2021, subject to COVID-19 Warning and following CDC guidelines in place at the time of the event.

President Lapinto asked Chief Peck if this is the same as prior years?

Chief Peck stated yes.

President Lapinto stated this is the week before Autumn Leaf and usually the race kicks it off.

Ms. Tracy Becker, Clarion Area Chamber of Business & Industry, doesn't know anything.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Logue to approve the Clarion Area Chamber of Business & Industry's special event request for I Love Clarion event to be held July 3, 2021, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. and to consider waiving or reducing the special event fee for crafters, subject to COVID-19 Warning and following CDC guidelines in place at the time of the event.

Dr. Sanders Dédé asked why the Borough would waive or reduce the fee for the crafters?

President Lapinto asked Solicitor Marshall to explain.

Solicitor Marshall reported his understanding is if Council does want to waive or reduce the fee it would have to be done by resolution, because the fees were established by resolution at budget time. A vote cannot be done to address this tonight. It would have to be handled at the next Council Meeting or the one in the middle of the month.

Mr. Aaron inquired how much the fee is?

President Lapinto pointed out normally it would be \$75; however, the Borough was going to charge them the special event permit fee, which is \$50.

Mr. Aaron commented the reason is due to where everyone is at economically right now as far as local crafters. This is a 5-hour event, and the crafters are hoping to make \$50 that day. Since it is not a full day event and with the event being held in town, the idea is to draw people in as far as foot traffic to the other local businesses as well. If the fee remains at \$50, Mr. Aaron feels there's a strong chance the vendors won't come.

Ms. Roberts inquired if an advertisement would be necessary to adopt a resolution?

Solicitor Marshall doesn't believe so. It would just have to be passed at the next meeting.

Mr. Aaron pointed out that would have to be at the June 15th meeting or else the July meeting would be after the event.

Since the second meetings were advertised at the beginning of the year and it was announced tonight, Ms. Roberts stated the Borough wouldn't have to incur additional costs.

Solicitor Marshall reported it's not even that. The Borough's ordinance states that Councilmembers can adjust fees by resolution without advertising costs.

Dr. Sanders Dédé noted crafters have never been at the I Love Clarion event before and inquired what about the local businesses and trying to encourage people to shop locally.

Since the event is being forced to the mall again this year, Mr. Aaron commented the idea is to do something in the Park with the hopes of bringing foot traffic through town. The local businesses could take advantage of that aspect. The University is still unavailable for the fireworks this year.

President Lapinto added the businesses are planning sidewalk sales.

Ms. Tracy Becker, Executive Director of the Clarion Area Chamber of Business & Industry, informed Council initially plans were to use the University for the I Love Clarion event; however, it is still closed. So, the fireworks company agreed to go to the mall. With that being said, the event this year and next year will be on a Saturday and Sunday. The Downtown businesses, just like everybody else, have felt the economic impact last year. So, the intention is to start the morning with the Farmer's Market by the Courthouse from 8 a.m. until Noon; Veterans presentation and Craft Show at 9 a.m.; Bingo at 10 a.m.; Hope Rising offering games for the kids from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.; chicken box luncheon for a picnic from Noon to 1 p.m.; Bingo from 1-2 p.m.; and an eating contest for little kids eating blueberry miniature pies with a white t-shirt from 2-3 p.m. As this is going on, Ms. Becker stated the Chamber wanted the Downtown businesses to do sidewalk sales. Then the event would switch in the evening to go down to the Mall. At 5 p.m., there will be food vendors: Women of the Moose serving hotdogs; Roadhouse selling cheeseburgers, and Eat 'n Park doing apple pies; at 6 p.m. Veterans Presentation followed by presenting of colors at 6:45 p.m.; 7 p.m., Wrangler Band will play; and the fireworks will begin at 9:30 p.m. People can come to Downton in the morning, take a break, and then come back in the evening to the Mall. The Chamber has been discussing the possibility of crafts at the stadium for a couple years, but it has not been possible. Ms. Becker informed Council the Chamber is not charging a fee to the crafters only for the drinks when the event is down at the Mall and a small nominal fee for the box lunch. All that money will go towards the fireworks. The crafters, just like the businesses, have been financially impacted. During Autumn Leaf Festival, 200,000 people come into Clarion that Friday. The hope is that maybe a couple hundred people will come to town on July 3rd and enjoy some fun events for the day.

President Lapinto asked if the number of crafters will be limited?

Ms. Becker thinks no more than 20 vendors will be asked to participate. The Chamber doesn't want anything duplicated that the businesses can offer to shoppers. From the list of 2,000 vendors, the Chamber will only invite Clarion County vendors.

Ms. Roberts inquired where the crafters will set up?

Mr. Becker commented all the events will be held in the Park or down at the Mall.

President Lapinto added that Mr. Crooks, Secretary LaVan-Preston, Mr. Aaron, and she met with Jarred Heuer from the Clarion County Economic Development Corporation today regarding a request from Wal*mart to find a location to offer the COVID vaccine. President Lapinto was very shocked to find out the low percentage of people in Clarion that have gotten the shot. The first concern was with CVS offering vaccines. However, after personally contacting CVS, they do not have an issue with Wal*Mart providing this service as well.

Ms. Becker also discussed this with Mr. Heuer and feels that would be a great time to offer the vaccine. If it is hot that day though, the vaccine needs to remain cold. The Haskell House is not available due to a scheduled event but other places are being looked at.

President Lapinto stated Wal*Mart will give the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, so it is just one dose eliminating the need to come back after a couple weeks. Mr. Crooks is also going to discuss this with Destination Clarion Downtown to see if the businesses would offer incentives to encourage more people to get the vaccine.

Mr. Crooks agreed and plans to offer the first 20 people a t-shirt that would get a vaccine. The whole thrust is trying to encourage people in the community to get the vaccine to do his/her part to get rid of this virus. Mr. Crooks stressed he does not want to be closed down again, which is a very strong possibility with the whole country. Pennsylvania is at 70%, but that is only because of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The rural towns are way down; it's about 30%.

Ms. Becker reported the thought is to also have Wal*Mart set up during Autumn Leaf. Maybe a glass could be given as an incentive.

Mr. Aaron suggested the Fulmer House might be a great place for Wal*Mart to set up.

President Lapinto stated there is a motion and second on the floor. The vaccine will just be part of the event, if possible, to arrange.

Mr. Aaron asked if two motions would be needed.

Solicitor Marshall commented Council can approve the request and then communicate that Council will address the rate at the next meeting.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea with Dr. Sanders Dédé voting no.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino to approve the special event request from the Clarion Area Chamber of Business and Industry for the Autumn Leaf Festival request to be held October 2-10, 2021, subject to COVID-19 Warning and following CDC guidelines in place at the time of the event.

President Lapinto reported normally this request would have been reviewed at all Borough Committee meetings, but it came in late and Chief Peck would like Council to act so that he can send the request onto PennDOT to close the roadways.

Ms. Roberts inquired if Interstate 80 will be the same mess then that it is now and if PennDOT will be less inclined to approve the closures for that reason?

Chief Peck thinks this issue occurred a couple years ago, and PennDOT did stop the construction for the week. If the traffic is still being detoured through Downtown, it will be a big issue.

If the vaccination rates have not improved or increased, Dr. Sanders Dédé feels the area will run the risk of COVID cases increasing and questioned how that will be handled with a possibility of a setback and shutting down the businesses again.

President Lapinto stated the request will be subject to guidelines in place at the time of the event and stressed she wants Autumn Leaf Festival to happen this year. Everyone must be cognitive of this possibility as well as the big possibility that PennDOT will not allow the streets to be closed for the event. President Lapinto asked Mr. Garbarino if he had any questions as this is his first ALF request. Secretary LaVan-Preston did double check the request to make sure it was the same as in the past years.

Mr. Garbarino noted he's fine with the request.

When this event was being put together, Mr. Aaron believes the Pennsylvania Department of Health had different restrictions in place. The Chamber does have some protocols in place.

Ms. Becker stressed everyone can plan for the event but realizes that at any given time something can change and will need adjusted. In discussion with Chief Peck, Ms. Becker reported there are Plan B and C if the need arises.

Mr. Aaron thinks everyone can plan for the best case scenario and then deal with the worst case if need be. If it cannot be held, then it can be cancelled.

Mayor Whitting asked Ms. Becker if there were any modifications or changes from the 2019 request as far as the scheduled events.

Ms. Becker stated no. The first hurdle is to get the request for road closures to PennDOT to see if it will be approved completely or just certain portions. PennDOT did approve the Laurel Festival in Brookville so hopefully this will be approved as well. The Chamber cannot move too far ahead and call all the other organizations; because if PennDOT doesn't approve it completely, then everything will need halted. That's where alternate plans will come in. Ms. Becker commented the firemen will not be doing fire truck rides.

Chief Peck announced PennDOT issues the permits for the road closures each day of the event. So, that is how the event request is submitted. PennDOT might approve everything or just a day here or there. That's why it is so important to get a decision so the event can move forward. If not, it will take time to prepare changes.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea with Dr. Sanders Dédé abstaining. After further questioning from Rodney Sherman, The Clarion News, for the reason to abstain, Dr. Sanders Dédé changed her vote to no.

On a motion by Mr. MacBeth with a second by Mr. Aaron, giving permission to advertise and hold Preliminary Public Hearing on FFY 2021 CDBG Application in the amount of \$107,115, was carried with a vote of seven yea.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE

Dr. Sanders Dédé informed everyone a public meeting will be held on June 17, 2021, at 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church. It is open to the public. The main discussion will be the multi-generational park on Second Avenue as well as other items and seeking volunteers. It will be subject to CDC Rules in place at the time.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN

Mr. Crooks hopes everyone has noticed the flowers that have been planted in the pots as well as two of the new \$2,000 wrought iron planters that are in front of the Legion and also Wein's. The flowers are really starting to grow and take root.

PUBLIC WORKS

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino to approve the hiring of Eric Sharrar at \$17 per hour subject to the pre-employment testing for the position of Public Works Laborer.

Ms. Roberts explained the gentleman that was offered the job last month declined the position.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino, accepting the apparent low bid for the 2021 Paving Project Option #2 to Hager Paving Inc. in the amount of \$98,156.00, pending review of all necessary bonds and insurances.

Secretary LaVan-Preston informed everyone included this year will be Barber Street, 8th Avenue SE, Weaver Place, Madison Road, Fairview Avenue, and Leatherwood Drive.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. MacBeth to approve the request from Clarion Area School District for the Borough to provide in-kind services to haul away old mulch and timbers from the playground for the School District's Project.

Several years ago, President Lapinto stated a couple Councilmembers met with Dr. Carrico in re to supplying funding. That wasn't possible, but the Borough offered in-kind help.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

STORMWATER AUTHORITY

At the last Stormwater Authority Board Meeting, Mr. Aaron announced the Board approved the resignation from Zachary Garbarino from the Board due to scheduling conflicts. Any interested parties can submit his/her name in writing to the Borough Office for consideration.

PUBLIC SAFETY

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino to give permission for the Solicitor to advertise Ordinance #2021-836, an Ordinance amending the Traffic Ordinance.

Mr. Aaron reported this is to address parking issues that were raised last month between Madison Road and Liberty Street on Eighth Avenue.

Secretary LaVan-Preston agreed that individuals can park on Eighth Avenue between Madison Road and Liberty Street in the evening hours and on weekends. Parking will be restricted on Eighth Avenue from Main Street to Madison Road due to the terrible bottleneaking in that area.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth to give permission to accept the resignation from Neil Kemmer from the Detective position, effective May 28, 2021, with regrets.

Chief Peck stated Officer Kemmer did a good job but has had enough. This is probably a year longer than Officer Kemmer wished to perform those duties.

Mr. Aaron thanked Officer Kemmer for his time and effort.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth, giving permission to promote Roger Wright to the Detective position at an additional \$1/hour, effective immediately, was carried with a vote of seven yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. MacBeth, accepting the bid from Bayridge Motors, Inc., Staten Island, New York/Yousef Dabbagh, Island Lake, Illinois in the amount of \$568 for 2010 police cruiser, was carried with a vote of seven yea.

LIBRARY BOARD

Mayor Whitling stated the Board did have a quorum but had nothing to report at this time.

HOUSING AND ZONING

Ms. Logue stated the Housing and Zoning Committee met on May 17th, and the report is in the packet.

RECREATION

Ms. Roberts had nothing to report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary LaVan-Preston had nothing to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Whitling also thanked Officer Kemmer for his service to protect the community.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Crooks thanked Mr. Aaron and Mr. Garbarino for the amazing help with planting the flowers.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Borough Secretary