

January 3, 2023, Council Meeting
Minutes

The regular meeting of the Clarion Borough Council was held on January 3, 2023, in 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, Mr. Aaron, Mr. Montana, and President Lapinto. Dr. Sanders Dédé and Ms. Schmader were absent. Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Solicitor Marshall, Mr. Colosimo, Mr. Preston, Chief Peck, Mr. Sharrar, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Montana, approving the minutes of the December 6, 2022, Public Hearing, was carried with a vote of three yeas with Mr. Garbarino and Mr. Aaron abstaining as they were absent.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving the December 6, Council Meeting, minutes, was carried with a vote of five yeas.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Montana to approve the December 20, 2022, Council Meeting, minutes, was carried with a vote of three yeas with Mr. Garbarino and Ms. Roberts abstaining as they were absent.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

There were none.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the appropriations for the month of January, carried with a vote of five yeas.

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

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino to approve Resolution #2023-473, approving the proposal from First United National Bank for the 2023 Tax Anticipation Note in the amount of \$300,000 at the rate of 5.25%.

Mr. Aaron asked how that interest rate compared to years' past?

Mr. Colosimo stated it is high.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated, last year, it was 1.95%.

President Lapinto pointed out everyone will notice the results shows S & T Bank has a lower interest rate, but there were more costs involved. Thankfully, the Borough has not had to use it and does not anticipate using it this year either.

The motion carried with a vote of five yea.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving Resolution #2023-474, a Resolution of Clarion Borough, authorizing execution of the Cable Franchise Agreement with Comcast of Colorado/Pennsylvania/West Virginia, LLC, was carried with a vote of five yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino to approve Susquehanna Accounting & Consulting Solutions, Inc., as the Borough's financial consultant for 2023 at a rate of \$195 per hour.

Mr. Aaron inquired if this rate is just for one year?

President Lapinto agreed.

Mr. Aaron clarified that it was \$190 for each year of 2019, 2020, and 2021; one year at a time.

President Lapinto stated yes.

The motion carried with a vote of five yea.

President Lapinto reminded everyone that Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC will complete the 2022 audit at the price of \$10,980 and asked if this will need rebid this year sometime?

Normally when the exit audit meeting is held, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated Zelenkofske Axelrod is asked for prices. Since it is a professional service, the Borough is not required to bid it.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino, reappointing Richard Wilson to a 5-year term on the Storm Water Authority Board to expire January 2028, was carried with a vote of five yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino to approve The EADS Group, Inc., as the Borough Engineer for the 2023 rate chart that was included in the packet.

President Lapinto thanked Mr. Colosimo for providing the detailed outline of the prices.

The motion carried with a vote of five yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Roberts to approve Clarion County to submit a time extension request to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for the Clarion Borough FFY 2019 CDBG Program.

Mr. Colosimo explained the South Sixth Avenue Reconstruction Project is well underway but will not be finished until Spring of 2023. The 2019 money is one of the earliest years and needs a time extension. Since the County plans to request an extension for their 2019 money until the end of 2023, Mr. Colosimo feels it would be wise for the Borough to do it as well. Clarion Borough won't need until the end of 2023, but it will be available if it is approved.

The motion carried with a vote of five yea.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE REPORT

There was none.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN REPORT

Backing up to Blueprint, Mr. Crooks stated the Committee was awarded the next phase of funding, which was a little over \$600,000. It is very exciting to see the progress. One of the topics that is going to be coming up is who is going to manage it. Mr. Crooks feels that could be the Borough, the YMCA, the County, and/or the University and encouraged everyone to start thinking about if he/she would be interested in attempting to do it.

Ms. Roberts inquired what kind of arrangement the Committee is thinking about? In other words, when Mr. Crooks says maintain it, does that mean the Borough would insure it, be responsible for it, and be the entity for the park?

Mr. Crooks doesn't think the Committee got to that point yet and thinks the park could be a significant money maker as the full ice-skating rink can be rented out for use. Once it's built, the Blueprint Committee is beginning to think about who will manage and run it.

If the Borough were to own that property, Ms. Roberts commented it couldn't be used for money making. It would be like Paul A. Weaver Community Park where the Borough funds the facility.

Ms. Janice Horn thinks the Blueprint Committee will own it.

Ms. Roberts doesn't know how that would work.

Mr. Crooks feels all these questions are up in the air, and it's just time to begin thinking who should be involved in it. This park will make a big impact on the Borough.

Ms. Horn added there are representatives of the Borough on the Blueprint Committee. Unfortunately, there is no representation from the University now.

Mr. Garbarino asked for elaboration on the funding stage 2, this \$600,000, what will it do?

Mr. Crooks believes that's going to be the playground and also the sand volleyball court. The next phase will be the pickleball and basketball courts. The last phase will be the ice-skating rink, which will be in the center of the park.

Ms. Horn mentioned splashpads will be there as well.

Mr. Crooks stated there will be public bathrooms, a place to rent ice skates, and many other areas, which the Blueprint Committee realizes now it does not have the capacity to operate.

Honestly, President Lapinto commented the Borough does not have the capacity to operate it either.

Mr. Crooks reported the Committee wants everyone's opinion, and it may be a collaborative effort.

Moving on to Destination Clarion Downtown, Mr. Crooks thinks Clarion looked amazing this year for the holidays, which involved a collaboration of a lot of people. The park looked absolutely beautiful and stunning and was decorated by the Legion and VFW. Mr. Crooks thanked the Public Works Department for the great job in putting up the wreaths and snowflakes. Traveling through Butler, Kane, and many other communities, Mr. Crooks stated those didn't compare with Clarion Borough. The Chamber helped place the trees on the Chericos property. Mr. Crooks pointed out this just shows what people can do to make a change. Mr. Crooks thanked President Lapinto for all her support, and Mr. Colosimo for making sure the planters were done.

Since this is the last of the CDBG money, President Lapinto stressed it would be used for downtown.

Mr. Crooks thanked Council, and the community for all his/her work.

President Lapinto noted it was beautiful either walking or riding through town at night.

Mr. Crooks thinks the weather event had a very significant affect on people. It was unbelievable how many people were still shopping on Friday and Saturday. The free parking was really appreciated. With the amount of rain and weather, the bags on the meters help up pretty good. Some people have questioned why Destination Clarion Downtown doesn't buy fabric bags like Brookville. Mr. Crooks stated fabric bags are very expensive.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson thinks the bags have held up pretty well.

Back to the Blueprint Committee, Ms. Horn added the Seneca Rocks Audubon has received a grant for \$1,000 for a pollinator garden to be added to the playground area.

President Lapinto asked if the bird building is still planned?

Ms. Horn confirmed it was.

PUBLIC WORKS

In the absence of Ms. Schmader, Mr. Montana stated he forwarded pictures of a storm sewer drain at the intersection of Madison Road and Dietz Place diagonal from the old Garby Theater and car wash to Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston. This drain is slowly sinking. Heavy pavement was all over the alley on Dietz Place.

Mr. Preston stated he is aware of that.

STORM WATER AUTHORITY

Mr. Aaron informed everyone that the Storm Water Authority Board Meetings will be held the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. at the Clarion Free Library. The time was changed for 2023.

Mr. Aaron also reminded everyone the Board is operating one member short due to a resignation. If anyone is interested, please contact the Borough Office.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Aaron had nothing to report.

President Lapinto thinks the firemen and police officers did an excellent job and deserve credit on being called out so many times due to the weather. This is not an easy task.

Chief Peck stated, especially the fireman.

Mr. Garbarino agreed with the comments and reminded everyone this is a volunteer company.

President Lapinto doesn't know what the Borough would do without them.

LIBRARY REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson announced the Library Director position has been advertised and hopes the Library will get some applicants.

HOUSING AND ZONING

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino to adopt Ordinance #2023-841, an amendment to the Rental Unit Ordinance to add short-term rentals. The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

RECREATION

Ms. Roberts had nothing to report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated she is working on all the year-end reports.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson added many wonderful comments were received about the good job the firemen and police did and cannot imagine how any of them had a chance to get warm before being called out again.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Non-Agenda Items

Mr. Jim Crooks stated trees.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Roberts, the meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary