

April 4, 2023, Council Meeting
Minutes

The regular meeting of the Clarion Borough Council was held on April 4, 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, Dr. Sanders Dédé, Mr. Aaron, Mr. Montana, Ms. Schmader, and President Lapinto. Ms. Roberts was absent. Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Solicitor Marshall, Mr. Colosimo, Mr. Preston, Mr. Sharrar, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present. Chief Peck was absent.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the minutes of the March 7, 2023, Council Meeting, was carried with a vote of six yeas.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

There were none.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Schmader, approving the appropriations for the month of April, carried with a vote of six yeas.

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

President Lapinto announced the second Council Meeting, if necessary, will be held on April 18, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the Clarion Free Library. At the present time, there is not a need.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Schmader, approving Terra Works, Inc., Pay Application Number Five in the amount of \$4,251.25 for Contract 2022-2 South Sixth Avenue Reconstruction Project and to authorize Clarion County to complete a CDBG Program drawdown and payment to Terra Works, Inc., in the amount of \$4,251.25, was carried with a vote of six yeas.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino to approve ratification of the 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 Cooperation Agreements between Clarion Borough and Clarion County for the administration of Clarion Borough's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The motion carried with a vote of six yeas.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving to amend Clarion Borough Contract 2021-3 with Terra Works, Inc., for the PA Small Water and Sewer Grant Multi-Site Stormwater Improvements Project to include the approved Sunset Drive Project Site and approved additional construction items for the Whitehill Place Project Site, was carried with a vote of six yeas.

President Lapinto asked Mr. Colosimo for a brief update on the Fire Department doors.

Mr. Colosimo stated EADS Architects provided a cost estimate of \$4,000 to review the plans, drawings, and specifications for the fire hall doors.

Since that is not on the agenda, President Lapinto reported that will have to be handled next month.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE REPORT

On March 17, 2023, Dr. Sanders Dédé announced an email was received from the Local Share Statewide Program indicating that the Blueprint Community Multi-Generational Community Park has received a grant of \$400,000. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development funded this grant. Dr. Sanders Dédé commented this will be used for the basketball and tennis courts and definitely will speed along the progress of the park.

President Lapinto asked if there is a timetable when the playground equipment will be installed.

Dr. Sanders Dédé pointed out it will be contingent upon the weather.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN REPORT

Mr. Crooks informed everyone the Alley Cats and Destination Clarion Downtown group are excited and looking forward to planting the flowers. The plan is to do it the weekend before Memorial Day.

Mr. Crooks understands that the sidewalks along Main Street will be washed down and the benches will be put out soon.

Mr. Crooks asked his sister, Nancy Hanna, to share what Destination Clarion Downtown is planning as far as Summer Fest and the pop-up shops.

Ms. Hanna stated the Committee is going to have Clarion Summer Fest again and is thankful to still be working with the grant funds from the Blueprint Committee and the hotel tax. About 20,000 fliers are going to be printed and distributed throughout western Pennsylvania truck stops. Ms. Hanna submitted a special event request to the Borough to close Sixth Avenue from Main Street and Merle Road on a Saturday in the months of June, July, and August from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. In the morning, the pop-ups will be along Main Street, kids activities will be held in the afternoon from 1-3 p.m., and then live music in the evening hours. A steering committee is working together and are thinking of featuring outdoor/recreational events for June, celebrating hometown in July, and music and arts in August. The chalk art festival is going to be held and had a very fledgling start last year.

President Lapinto asked everyone to pray for no rain.

Ms. Hanna agreed, but the materials for the artists will have to be available. Last year, the Main Street Center was going to allow that event to be held in their downstairs, if it rained. Phrame It is going to help with this event, which could be a really big tourism for Clarion. The closest chalk art festival in western Pennsylvania is in State College. Ms. Hanna commented it's a big deal and involves people of all ages. When the Blueprint Community completed surveys on what residents wanted to see in the area, people wanted outdoors and trails (reason for hikes on the North Country Trail and Rail 66), kayaking (Go Paddle, which was also seed money through Blueprint), and the other was for music and arts. The hope in the future is not only to have a chalk art festival but a whole music festival. If anyone wants a draft copy of the schedule, Ms. Hanna had a couple tonight.

PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. Schmader reminded everyone that Clarion Borough's Clean-Up Day is scheduled for May 13, 2023, from 6 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Residents and businesses can bring his/her items to the Public Works Building that day to dispose of them.

Ms. Schmader announced that Spring leaf-pick up will be Monday and Tuesdays, April 24th and April 25th, and May 1st and May 2nd. The leaves must be at the curbside by 7 a.m. There's no need to call. Ms. Schmader commented no limbs or brush can be taken.

STORM WATER AUTHORITY

Mr. Aaron had nothing to report.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Aaron had nothing to report.

LIBRARY REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson commented the Library Director position has been relisted; and hopefully someone with experience will be found very soon.

President Lapinto thought the meeting with Mayor Fulmer Vinson and a Library Board member went well and this is the first time to have one.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson agreed it was.

HOUSING AND ZONING

Mr. Garbarino, in the absence of Ms. Roberts, stated the Housing and Zoning Report is in the packet for everyone's review. If anyone has any questions, he/she can direct them to Zoning Officer Sharrar.

RECREATION

Mr. Aaron, in the absence of Ms. Roberts, asked Mr. Colosimo for an update on the pavilion at the park.

Mr. Colosimo discussed this briefly with the engineer on how to proceed with the bidding of the project. Nothing has been bid yet.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated the financial consultant is coming later this week to pick up all the information to start preparing for the 2022 audit.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson informed everyone she was recently interviewed by the New York Times, which she appreciated the chance to do. However, the article contained a misquote. If anybody ever has any questions about the comments, he/she may reach out to her directly.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

President Lapinto announced Council just received a letter this evening that was from the Clarion County Commissioners, which Mr. Aaron and she had a couple days prior to review. Basically, the Commissioners want all the municipalities to form a Public Safety Authority in regards to EMS. This whole idea is based on what is happening in the Ross Township/West View Borough area, which is located in the Pittsburgh area. Reading the letter, President Lapinto first saw the billing, which is very concerning as the Borough cannot take on another billing process. It was brought to her attention that a lot of municipalities would join together and outsource the billing. Also, it was not clear if the fee is per individual or per household, which it is per household. President Lapinto questioned how senior complexes and/or rentals that have multiple dwellings will be handled. Another question is what about the students? President Lapinto stressed she will not vote to add any more costs onto the students attending PennWest University. What the proposal indicates is the landlords would be responsible for collecting his/her fee from each of the tenants. President Lapinto noted the fee that is being suggested is between \$55 to \$85 per year per household and possibly \$150 per year for businesses. The fee would have to be set by the municipalities that would join together. For instance, if Strattanville Borough, Clarion Borough, and Monroe Township would join as an Authority, the members would decide on one fee and also designate who the provider would be. Right now, the provider is Clarion Hospital. Another question is once the money is collected, does the Authority give it directly to the hospital? President Lapinto commented there are just so many questions. Solicitor Marshall did not see this letter until this evening. According to the letter, President Lapinto mentioned Council would have to submit a letter of intent on going along with this idea and then develop an ordinance. When President Lapinto reached out to ask for answers, no one had any for her. This is not something that will happen overnight and may take a while to get together. The Clarion News and exploreClarion both had articles covering this letter. Knowing this will take a lot of time and needs to be discussed, President Lapinto appointed a Public Safety Authority Committee with Mr. Montana, as Chair, Mr. Aaron, Mr. Sharrar, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston, and herself. The Committee will attend all the meetings to try to find out as much as possible on the best way to handle this situation. Everyone knows there are problems with EMS in the County that must be addressed. This month, the Committee will meet to discuss whether or not to send a letter of intent. President Lapinto voiced concern that the letter points out 'if the municipality chooses not to participate with a regional authority, it will have to find another way to fulfill it's obligation to provide EMS services, including financing and operating such a service provide'. In discussions today, the County committee has been meeting for quite some time on how to come up with a solution. President Lapinto also pointed out there is abuse in the County with people using the ambulances to be taken to the Clarion Hospital only to turn around and go out the back door to Wal*Mart. President Lapinto personally feels that has got to stop.

Mr. Jim Crooks inquired if the hospital is giving up soliciting memberships from families in the area?

President Lapinto doesn't believe so and asked that question as well. The Ross Township/West View Borough Authority is very heavy, and individuals can receive penalties for not paying the fee as well as possible liens being placed on his/her house. Before any kind of decision is made, answers are

necessary.

Mr. Jim Averill commented people think that throwing more money towards EMS will solve the problem, which may not necessarily happen. EMS is having trouble getting people to come and work. People may think if you dangle a big bunch of money in front of him/her, they will come back.

President Lapinto agreed and stated there are just too many questions that need to be answered.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Non-Agenda Items

In reference to the pool situation, Mr. Jacob Deemer, exploreClarion reporter, asked if anyone on Council has any perspective location for building another one?

Mr. Aaron, member of the Recreation Committee, stated there are no plans or location right now.

Mr. Deemer inquired if, in the future, there are any sort of plans of rebuilding?

President Lapinto added everything is landlocked, and feels the only feasible location would be at Weaver Park. This is why the School District wanted the property.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson suggested the old Jeep dealership as a possible location.

Mr. Deemer clarified there is a clear desire to have a pool?

President Lapinto agreed there has always been a desire. Everything was in line to apply for a grant in the amount of \$1/2-1 million. However, a new lease with the School District was necessary. After meeting with the school and being upfront on the timeline for the grant and construction timeline, the District proposed a new lease that contained deadlines that could not be met.

Mr. Aaron verified there no desire to close the pool

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Mr. Garbarino, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary