

October 3, 2023, Council Meeting  
Minutes

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

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second Ms. Schmader, approving the minutes of the September 5, 2023, Council Meeting, was carried with a vote of six yeas.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

Mr. Aaron Husted, along with Ms. Cindy Staley, introduced their new group, Clarion Business and Revitalization Group, which basically has a 2 missions. The group wants to fundraise for projects around the town and do things but also want to build an army of volunteers to help. The idea for the introduction was so Councilmembers, the Mayor, and the public knows who this new group is and what it will be doing.

Ms. Staley feels Mr. Husted covered everything. Clarion Business and Revitalization Group wants to fundraise to support other group needs in the community.

President Lapinto verified their group is 501c3?

Ms. Staley stated yes.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving the appropriations for the month of October, carried with a vote of six yeas.

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

President Lapinto announced the second Council Meeting will be held October 17, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the Clarion Free Library, if necessary.

Because of Election Day, President Lapinto reminded everyone that the November Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the Clarion Free Library.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Aaron to approve Delta Zeta's special event request for 5K run/walk Turtle Trot to be held April 21, 2024, from 8 a.m. until Noon.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated this is an annual request and

there are no concerns with it. There is plenty of time for the Chief to get it on the schedule.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Schmader to approve Clarion Area Chamber of Business & Industry's amended Autumn Leaf Festival request to add Clarion River Brewing Company's 1<sup>st</sup> Beer Stein Challenge to be held on October 7, 2023, (Parade Day), under the traffic light at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street.

President Lapinto asked for any discussion.

Mr. Aaron asked what the reason was for adding to the event once it has already started.

Back in February, President Lapinto informed Council that Chief Peck, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston and she met with Chamber representatives and Mr. Bryan Smith to discuss this event. After that, there was some confusion, as it was reported the event would be held on Clarion River Brewing Company's property; however, it was discovered it was not. President Lapinto stated another meeting was held as it was not included in the original Autumn Leaf Festival request, and, for liability purposes, this event needed to be addressed.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston commented the event had to be approved in some fashion, because the event was going to be held under the traffic signal at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street before the parade. The Chamber submitted an amended Autumn Leaf Festival request; and, after checking with Burns and Burns Insurance, the Chamber's original insurance certificate will cover the liability. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated that was her primary concern is that liability coverage was available.

Mr. Aaron questioned usually Council asks for events to be received 30 days in advance.

President Lapinto repeated there was confusion as to where the stein challenge was going to be held. It was discovered through exploreClarion that it was going to be on the street.

Dr. Sanders Dédé asked what happens if it spills on the ground and who will be responsible for cleaning it up before the parade begins. Walkers and kids performing could slip in this area.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston mentioned that concern at the meeting and was informed that there will be judges that when the participant's arm drops, he/she will automatically be eliminated. The participant will not hold the stein until it gets too heavy and then drops to the ground. However, Clarion River Brewing will have people there to clean up anything that does get on the pavement, which is what Mr. Bryan Smith relayed.

Having attended this challenge elsewhere, Ms. Roberts reported if a participant's arm moves out of a certain position, he/she would be eliminated. Also, the stein is made of very thick glass, meaning if it was dropped, it would not be in shards but chunks.

Ms. Elisabeth Fulmer asked when this will be held?

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated 11:30 a.m. underneath the traffic signal at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street on Parade Day.

President Lapinto noted the glass and water will weigh about 5 pounds.

Ms. Roberts doesn't believe it goes beyond 5 minutes.

The motion was carried with a vote of five yea with Mr. Aaron voting no, strictly on the timing.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Schmader to approve Clarion Area Chamber of Business & Industry's request for free parking to be November 24<sup>th</sup>, "Black Friday", and December 1 through 26, 2023.

President Lapinto asked when the meters will be bagged.

Ms. Staley reported December 1<sup>st</sup> through 26<sup>th</sup>.

The motion was carried with a vote of six yea.

President Lapinto announced the next request from the Chamber is for the Ugly Sweater Christmas Parade. After speaking with officials at Immaculate Conception, Mass on Saturday is held at 4 p.m. with it being over at 5 p.m. Therefore, the timing needs changed for line up at 6 p.m. with the parade to begin at 6:30 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving Clarion Area Chamber of Business & Industry's special event request for Ugly Sweater Christmas Parade to be held on December 2, 2023, line up at 6 p.m. with parade step-off at 6:30 p.m. from Immaculate Conception Church Parking Lot to Main Street to Fourth Avenue, was carried with a vote of six yea.

President Lapinto commented the next resolution is a request being made from the County to all municipalities to have Clarion County Economic Development Corporation to handle the tourism.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Aaron to approve Resolution #2023-480, a resolution in support of Clarion County selecting a new tourism promotion agency. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Schmader to approve Change Order Number One to Clarion Borough Contract 2021-3 Multi-Site Storm Sewer Project – Whitehill Place component to add 22 lineal feet of 12-inch cross pipe and one concrete 2 x 4 stormwater inlet at the intersection of Whitehill Place and Hulings Street for a total cost of \$7,098. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

Mr. Montana reported that a meeting will be held in about two week and then hopefully something will be reported at the next meeting.

#### BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Sanders Dédé commented the Committee is installing a temporary sign on the wrought iron fence at the Neighborhood Park on Second Avenue. If it is not there, it will be soon.

#### DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN REPORT

Mr. Jim Crooks thanked the Alley Cats for a fantastic job with the beautiful flowers and to the Rotary Club for providing \$1,000 to the Alley Cats to buy all the mums to add to the summer planters. Everything is so beautiful. Mr. Crooks thinks it's such a success to see how many other businesses in Clarion have jumped on the bandwagon and realized that a beautiful town does make a big difference.

Mr. Crooks also mentioned Rotary, along with University students and business owners, did a great job cleaning up along the Main Street area from the University up through the Downtown area. It just put some shine on the polish and is greatly appreciated.

Mr. Crooks stated the Destination Clarion Downtown Group began discussing the Christmas season.

Mr. Crooks welcomed Mr. Husted, Ms. Staley, and their new Committee and thanked him/her for putting all new lights on the trees for Autumn Leaf Festival and throughout the Christmas holidays. It just adds to the spirit of participation and is really awesome.

Ms. Nancy Womeldorf, along with Ms. Sharon Guth, just two representatives of the Alley Cats, informed Council this is the completion of the second year and \$4,400 was raised this year for planters, which included the money from Rotary and the \$750 from the Borough. There will be a little bit of an excess moving forward. During the year, Ms. Womeldorf commented there were as many as 25-30 volunteers that consisted of 4-member watering crews that came out 3-4 times a week depending on the weather and rain. Ms. Womeldorf thanked Mayor Jennifer Fulmer Vinson for purchasing Alley Cat T-shirts for all the Girl Scouts. Volunteers are pretty well covered. Ms. Womeldorf commented more people have approached the group wishing to sponsor a planter; however, all the planters have been sponsored so that money had to be turned down for now. The Alley Cats will have to think about what direction to go in the future. After the holidays in early 2024, Ms. Womeldorf reported fundraising will begin for next summer. Letters will be sent to all the sponsors this summer, giving him/her the ability to sponsor another planter. Since the group was able to plant all the flowers and still have some left over, the sponsorship fees will remain the same. Ms. Womeldorf stated the Alley Cats would like to stain the planters. According to Terra Works, the cost of the stain would be about \$90/gallon and could be applied as long as the planters have not been sealed. The Alley Cats feel 2 different colors would be necessary. There are volunteers to stain, and a couple chunks of concrete were tested to see how the stain would look. Ms. Womeldorf verified that the Borough owns the planters; and, if so, asked permission to stain the planters in the spring to make them a more natural stone color.

President Lapinto agreed the Borough owns the planters. A brief discussion was held with some

Councilmembers, and it was not a favorable response to stain them and asked Mr. Aaron for additional comments?

Mr. Aaron noted the Committee did discuss it briefly as it was brought up as an idea. The Committee could look into it a little more in detail now that the request is being made.

Ms. Womeldorf thinks the remaining funds could be used to pay for the 6 or 7 gallons necessary to stain the planters, and there are volunteers with knowledge to help stain the planters correctly.

Ms. Roberts asked how much it would cost to seal the planters afterwards?

Ms. Womeldorf doesn't know that but understands that the stain can be changed if it doesn't turn out the way he/she anticipate it. Once sealed though, the stain will remain.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson inquired if the planters should be sealed at some point.

Mr. Sharrar agreed they should be sealed to preserve each one at some point.

Ms. Womeldorf doesn't believe the planters are sealed at this time as she was informed the planters cannot be changed once they are sealed.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston asked Ms. Womeldorf what color the Alley Cats are thinking and suggested that it could be forwarded by email to show the Committee at their next meeting to review.

Ms. Womeldorf stated sort of a tannish cobblestone with the grout lines being a different color to make it look like actual stone versus poured concrete and will email the colors for the Committee.

Ms. Womeldorf asked Council if he/she would be opposed to the Alley Cats fundraising through private donations, or Mr. Husted's new group, or even possible grants to come up with funds to possibly purchase more planters, which Terra Works stated are \$4,500 each. These are very expensive.

Ms. Roberts doesn't think Council would be opposed if the Alley Cats would take this on.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston feels that the Alley Cats would have to work with the Borough on the placement of the planters to make sure everything is cohesive.

Ms. Womeldorf announced the wish list is for 7 additional square planters to be placed at every corner. This is a lot of money and is a long-term goal that the Alley Cats are willing to take on. It would make the planters look more symmetrical.

President Lapinto does not see opposition to that idea.

Ms. Womeldorf stated the request has been submitted to Council for a \$750 donation for 2024.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston agreed it's in the budget file and was relayed to Council already.

And, finally, Ms. Womeldorf thanked the Clarion Borough Public Works Department for providing two men and a half a day of labor to do all the heavy work to get the planters ready in the spring and asked if that would be possible again for 2024?

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated that shouldn't be a problem and asked Ms. Womeldorf to notify her so Public Works can coordinate with the Alley Cats.

Ms. Womeldorf agreed to do that and thanked Clarion Borough for everything.

#### PUBLIC WORKS/STORM WATER AUTHORITY REPORT

Mr. Aaron informed everyone leaf pick-up will begin October 16<sup>th</sup> and be every Monday and Tuesday through November 21, 2023. As a reminder, leaves only, no grass, limbs, and/or branches. On a request from the Public Works Department and also the Storm Water Authority Board, Mr. Aaron stressed the leaves should be on the curbside as it's easier to pick the leaves up and not on the roadway or in parking stalls to avoid the leaves going into the storm drains.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

Dr. Sanders Dédé announced that Trick-or Treat hours have been scheduled for Halloween, October 31, 2023, from 6-8 p.m. Anyone wishing to participate should leave his/her porch light on.

On a motion by Dr. Sanders Dédé with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving financing from First United National Bank at 5.50% interest rate for 36-months, or \$1,406.22 each month, for the purchase of the 2023 Dodge Charger and equipment, was carried unanimously.

On a motion by Dr. Sanders Dédé with a second by Ms. Roberts to approve the Debt Statement pursuant to Section 8110, Local Government Unit Debt Act, as of September 29, 2023.

President Lapinto asked if Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston had a copy of the Debt Statement with her this evening.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated she did have it for Councilmembers if he/she wish to review it. It was forwarded to the Solicitor for review.

Solicitor Marshall reviewed the copy, and the Borough is well within the debt limits to qualify as a small borrowing.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Dr. Sanders Dédé with a second by Ms. Roberts, adopting Resolution #2023-481, in re 2023 Dodge Charger and equipment, was carried with a vote of six yea.

### LIBRARY REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson thanked the library director, Rebecca Aharrah; the library staff; the Friends of the Library; as well as everyone that helped make the ALF Reception on Friday a wonderful event. It hasn't been held for a few years. Being her first time to attend, Mayor Fulmer Vinson thought it was lovely.

### HOUSING AND ZONING REPORT

On a motion by Ms. Schmader with a second by Ms. Roberts to give permission for the Solicitor to review and advertise Ordinance #2023-843, repealing the Cemetery Ordinance.

President Lapinto reminded everyone the Cemetery Association approached Mr. Sharrar to repeal this ordinance that prohibits individuals from being buried in a certain section.

Mr. Sharrar agreed the northeast corner is prohibited from burying anyone since the ordinance was in effect since 1977. The Association asked that Council abolish it, in case space would be needed.

President Lapinto commented no one could figure out why that ordinance was ever adopted.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

### RECREATION REPORT

Ms. Roberts had nothing to report.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston reported the Borough received a notice of estimated 2024 Municipal Liquid Fuels and Turnback Funds as \$126,270.01 (\$2,125.14 less than 2023) and \$1,320 (same as 2023), respectively.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston reported the 2022 Audit should be completed by the end of the week. Once received, an Exit Audit Meeting will be scheduled with the Administration Committee.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated the Borough received a notice from the United States Department of Commerce via email on September 27, 2023, in re to the 2020 Post-Census Group Quarters Review stating the revised population count, which Mr. Colosimo submitted to them, was not accepted due to: 1) the population count submitted is consistent with 2020 Census results and does not require population change and 2) case submitted is out-of-scope, see list of group quarter types eligible for PCGQR, or is found to be a housing unit or non-residential and not a group quarters. Mr. Colosimo may be able to provide more but is not available this evening.

President Lapinto commented the Borough is stuck at 3,931 but thanked the University, especially Jim Geiger, who really helped Mr. Colosimo put these figures together, despite the request being unsuccessful. Mr. Colosimo feels there is one more avenue to try where he received new estimates of population that could bring Clarion Borough up over 4,000, which DCED may look at. However,

President Lapinto cannot see DCED changing the whole CDBG program. What this means for Clarion Borough is the next census is in 2030. If the program lasts that long, the Borough will have lost well over \$1 million as about \$120,000 is received each year. President Lapinto stated if any other Councilmembers wish to see the letter she has it and gave credit to Mr. Colosimo for trying.

MAYOR'S REPORT and OLD BUSINESS

Inadvertently skipped.

NEW BUSINESS

President Lapinto stated it's October, meaning budget time, so this month the Committees will be discussing the wish list items for the 2024 Budget.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Janice Horn, 32 Barber Street, understands there have been reports in the paper that the Housing Authority has quite a few housing vacancies as well as other vacant houses in the Borough. Also, businesses are looking for employees. Ms. Horn suggested that Council investigate inviting some of the immigrants to come to this community. He/she are looking for jobs, could fill up the vacant housing, would be excellent citizens, and increase the population in the Borough, which is a concern.

President Lapinto noted Council will take it under advisement.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Schmader, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

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Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary