

April 1, 2025, Council Meeting
Minutes

The regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on April 1, 2025, 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 Ms. Whitling, Mr. Garbarino, Ms. Logue, Ms. Roberts, Mr. Montana, and President Lapinto. Mr. Aaron was absent. Mr. Preston, Mr. Colosimo, Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Chief Peck, Mr. Wolf, Solicitor Marshall, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the March 4, 2025, Council Meeting, minutes, was carried with a vote of six yea.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

Ms. Brehan Kelley thinks she approached Council 2 years ago in reference to who's responsible for the area of the crosswalk on Greenville Avenue to Tippin Gymnasium from Lot 11. After going to the Public Safety Office for the University, the Chief is out on training and will return Thursday but suggested she also check with the Borough. As soon as Ms. Kelley finds out who is responsible, whether it is the Borough or University, she is willing to go to the Safety Director for PennWEST to see what could be done. Ms. Kelley feels a blinking light is necessary there. There is so much traffic to Tippin from PIAA basketball and wrestling events to swimming lessons that will begin in the next 4 weeks where 200 little kids are registered. That crosswalk is used for University events all the time and is used by tons of parents and children. A lot of motorists do not drive the speed limit on Greenville. Also, there is not a lot of lighting in that area. Ms. Kelley explained she walks to work every day and uses that crosswalk. Tractor trailers, cars, and other vehicles go very fast and do not stop at the crosswalks. After the meeting 2 years ago, a pedestrian sign with a placard at the bottom, which is heavy, was placed in the middle of the road. However, maybe 3 days out of the week, the sign is moved into the grass on Tippin's property, which Ms. Kelley showed all Councilmembers a picture that she took that morning. Ms. Kelley does drag it back out to the middle. The reason it gets moved is because of the plows, but it's still 3 days a week even now. The lines that are painted to designate the crosswalk are all faded to the point you can barely see them. Ms. Kelley thinks that motorists don't recognize that they are supposed to stop when a pedestrian is there and isn't sure if it is a traffic or driving issue. If a blinking light would be installed, the motorists would see that people are trying to cross the street. Something is going to happen, a student, a child, adult will get hit, and then everyone will react. Ms. Kelley isn't sure who would get sued for that situation. Working at the pool, Ms. Kelley always watches the crosswalk, and walking it several times a day, it is just not safe. Ms. Kelley offered to call whoever it is to find out what to do in order to get something there to make it safer and volunteered to fundraise for the cost.

President Lapinto asked Chief Peck if this was addressed at one time?

Chief Peck agreed he had a discussion with the University Police Chief about it, but never heard anything back.

Mr. Garbarino inquired if Ms. Kelley is thinking about the light that is on East Main Street where the pedestrians push a button to cross?

Ms. Kelley agreed, and it does force people to stop.

Since that is a PennDOT road, Ms. Roberts feels PennDOT would need to be involved.

Mr. Preston agreed the Borough would probably have to go through PennDOT to get a flashing light in that area. Also, the Department does paint the crosswalks each year, but you have to have the right temperature to do it and the paint doesn't last like it used to. In that area, the crosswalk may need painted 2 or three times due to the amount of traffic on the roadway.

Ms. Kelley asked if reflective tape could be placed on the roadway?

Mr. Philip Kiser asked if something can be added to the paint so it's not slippery.

Mr. Garbarino asked if the Borough has a contact for PennDOT that Ms. Kelley can reach out to.

When the University asked permission to put in the parking lot, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston recalled the University requested the Borough to put in the crosswalk. During high-volume events, the University police were to be at that crosswalk with lights on and to help pedestrians cross for safety purposes. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston doesn't know who put the flashing lights in on East Main Street but knows the University maintains them.

President Lapinto suggested Ms. Kelley reach out to Public Safety and the University for possibly putting more lights up in this area. Also, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston can provide a contact name and number to Ms. Kelley.

Ms. Kelley will reach out to the Chief later this week and can contact PennDOT.

Since it is a PennDOT roadway, President Lapinto commented the Borough cannot just do whatever it wishes.

Chief Peck thinks it would be up to PennDOT to prove the need and then get funding to complete the project.

Last time, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston remembers discussion about putting up high-vis signs that point down to the crosswalk on both directions; however, that would require concrete work and, again, would need to be okay with PennDOT. The number will be provided to her as soon as possible.

Mr. Andrew Harbaugh pointed out that Ms. Kelley brought this exact issue to Council two years ago and feels it was on deaf ears.

Mr. Garbarino pointed out not on the Borough's part. The Chief did reach out to other people and did not get a response. Not trying to point fingers, because that is not what this is all about, but at the end of the day, if no one gets back to you, it is difficult for Council to move forward.

Mr. Harbaugh inquired if the Borough paints the crosswalk lines? And, if so, painting is just a band-aid on a bigger issue but would be something that could be done quickly before the students come to the swimming lessons.

Mr. Preston commented the Department does paint the crosswalks but repeated you cannot do it in the cold weather. You need a certain degree in order for it to dry properly to the street.

Mr. Harbaugh feels if the crosswalks need painted 3 times a year, then they do.

Ms. Kelley understands and will talk to the University chief later this week. Sometimes police do sit in this area to try to catch people not stopping and/or driving too fast as the traffic is significant in this area. When motorists don't stop for her, Ms. Kelley glares at them. Four years ago, a mother of one of her swimmers was hit in that crosswalk in the rain, resulting in a broken leg and back. Not only was it traumatic enough to everyone that witnessed it, but it is going to happen again. Ms. Kelley noticed a football player through no fault of his own thought the motorist was going to stop, proceeded to cross only for the motorist to speed up, and his bookbag actually got swiped. Thankfully, the young man got through in time. Ms. Kelley reported she just couldn't keep quiet anymore.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston will get in touch with Ms. Kelley with a number.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson proclaimed April as Pennsylvania 811 Safe Digging Month and encouraged all Pennsylvanians to visit the Pennsylvania 811 website at www.pa1call.org for information about digging safety. Mr. Daniel Nemanic, Damage Prevention Liaison for Pennsylvania One Call System, Inc., was unable to attend the meeting tonight.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Ms. Whitling with a second by Ms. Logue, approving the appropriations for the month of April, was carried with a vote of six yea.

President Lapinto reported the Treasurer's Report of Fund Totals and Budget Analysis are included in the packet for everyone's review.

President Lapinto stated the second meeting will be held on April 15, 2025, at 7 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library, if necessary. Currently, there is no need.

For transparency, President Lapinto announced Council will be proceeding with the TA-Set Aside Grant for 2nd Avenue Streetscape Project.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, approving the agreement between Clarion Borough and the EADS Group for professional services for the 2nd Avenue Streetscape Project, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue to approve the request from the Clarion Alley Cats for \$750 for the beautification efforts. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

President Lapinto stated next is a motion to approve a contract from Acrisure, which Mockenhaupt became part of at the beginning of 2025. This will be paid from the pension funds.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Whitling, approving the Actuarial Services Contract between Clarion Borough and Acrisure Mid-Atlantic Partners Insurance Services, LLC for the fiscal years 2025 and 2026 for an annual fee of \$11,660 to be paid quarterly with additional services to be charged at an hourly rate ranging from \$125 to \$350, was carried with a vote of six yea.

Before asking for a motion and in discussion with Solicitor Marshall prior to the meeting, President Lapinto commented this next item came up a week ago, which the Committees do not know about or have had a chance to discuss. Wells Fargo Advisors reached out to the Borough that they were no longer handling government/municipal pension plans. After checking with Acrisure, even though this is a professional service that Council can usually just designate someone, the Borough has to bid the services to manage the plans due to Act 44 of 2009. President Lapinto stated usually an item is not listed on the agenda unless the members were fully informed. However, Wells Fargo would like to be out of this type by the end of the second quarter, or June 30th. The last time Council sought request for proposals for someone to manage the pension plans was in 2001, and it was a very big project, involving all Councilmembers, interviews, and so on.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston informed Council Renee Siesky, Wells Fargo Advisors representative from the local office, has been very helpful and understands that Council has to follow a certain procedure. Ms. Siesky is making sure that no one's benefit will be disrupted during this time period. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston explained to Ms. Siesky that the process in 2001 started in June with an appointment in December. Council has to do its due diligence to make sure the process is followed correctly and whoever is chosen is best for the Borough. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston added Council did not have to advertise the last time but is required due to Act 44 of 2009. Since a lot has changed since the last RFP process, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston contacted Acrisure to assist in preparing an RFP that will include language that pertains to the Borough's actual pension plans. Once the proposals are received, interviews will be scheduled. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated all Council and a representative from Mockenhaupt sat in on the

interviews. This will probably be the same this time but also Ms. Siesky will be invited as she understands the way things are handled on their side. It is going to be a lot of work and take time, but it will get done as soon as practicable. A Pittsburgh representative from Wells Fargo Advisors provided one local firm that the RFP could be provided to. If anyone knows of any other firms, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston asked them to let her know. Once the RFP is prepared and reviewed, it will be advertised and sent to interested parties. The timeline will be tight, especially since Council meets once a month, possibly twice.

President Lapinto stressed that's why this was on the agenda this evening rather than waiting until May.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue, giving permission to advertise for RFP's for professional services to provide services to manage the Borough pension plans, was carried with a vote of five yea with Mr. Garbarino abstaining.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

On March 28, 2025, Mr. Montana stated Jackie Griebel sent an email to several people informing them the co-chair for the EMS asked her to pass along that some movement on the study of the EMS Services in Clarion County is occurring.

Mr. Montana announced Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston and he attended a PSATS seminar on March 20th. The instructor was very good and asked everyone present for issues for their community and ideas on how the problem could be solved. Nothing was solved, but all the questions were sent by email to everyone in attendance.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE

Ms. Logue reported one more coat is necessary for the pickleball court and an announcement will be coming on how they will be handled.

President Lapinto announced there will be six pickleball courts in all. Also, Ms. Logue presented the rules and regulations to the Committee.

Ms. Logue noted the rules and regulations can be found on the website. Hopefully, the signs will be up in the spring. A date for the grand opening will be announced.

Mr. Philip Kiser inquired who is actually running the park, opening and closing it each day, and things like that.

President Lapinto stated the Blueprint Committee and volunteers from the high school will help.

Ms. Logue added the 'Cool Cats' will take care of the trash.

President Lapinto commented the next phase is raising money for the building for the ice-skating rink.

Mr. Kiser asked if the park will be open after dark? Light fixtures have been installed at the basketball and pickleball courts.

Ms. Logue reported it will be open from sunrise to dusk, which is in the rules. Also, the rules indicate all Borough ordinances, including noise, must be followed. The lighting may have been installed, but the utilities will be added at a later date. Once the lights are operational, the rules may need amended. Any other questions, Ms. Logue directed Mr. Kiser to contact the Blueprint Committee as she is only one member of the Board.

Mr. Kiser pointed out everyone knows what happens after dark.

Chief Peck realizes that and there will be a bigger police presence when it gets warmer.

President Lapinto stressed the members are trying to make sure nobody gets on the courts yet as they are not ready and could result in damage.

Chief Peck asked Mr. Kiser since he lives close to the park if he has noticed much activity?

Mr. Kiser stated a few times someone pulls in at the parking area but not really in the park itself. There is an issue with people driving faster than they should be by the park so police presence would be a good thing. Mr. Kiser has a video of one that he'd like to share with the Chief.

Chief Peck thinks he already knows which one that is.

Ms. Logue knows there is a really loud truck.

Chief Peck agreed.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN

There was none.

PUBLIC WORKS/STORM WATER AUTHORITY

On a motion by Mr. Montana with a second by Mr. Garbarino to approve the proposal of Tri-County Industries to supply dumpsters for Clean-Up Day to be held Saturday, May 10, 2025, from 6 a.m. until 11 a.m. at the base price per roll off with fuel surcharges of \$500 plus \$80 per tonnage (same as last year).

President Lapinto asked if the residents are still required to show a license and if a list of items will be posted.

Mr. Preston stated yes.

If someone needs assistance, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston asked them to contact the office to make arrangements for the Public Works Department to pick up the items.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

Mr. Montana announced Spring leaf collection will be Monday and Tuesday, April 28th and 29th and May 5th and 6th. Leaves must be at curbside by 7 a.m. There is no need to call. Mr. Montana stressed no limbs or brush can be taken.

PUBLIC SAFETY

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Whitling, appointing Jim McGee to fill the vacancy on the Civil Service Commission that will expire December 31, 2027, was carried with a vote of six yea.

LIBRARY REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson had nothing to report.

President Lapinto asked if the Mayor wanted to let everyone know they didn't get the grant?

Mayor Fulmer Vinson commented basically none of the appropriations in the packet in DC were approved for the roof. The Library is looking at other possible sources. This was very disappointing news, because the roof on the building definitely needs replaced. Mayor Fulmer Vinson hopes there will be more to announce down the road.

President Lapinto thought the letter recommended to apply again.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson agreed but noted that is more than a year away and doesn't think the Library should put hopes on something like that. At this point, something is necessary sooner.

HOUSING AND ZONING

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Garbarino, giving permission to order 2021 International Construction Code Books at a cost not to exceed \$2,000, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Whitling to approve the request from Ace Hardware, 624 Main Street, to place merchandise on the sidewalk in front of the building.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston informed Council that the Sidewalk Ordinance requires permission from Council to place items on the sidewalks. The Committee feels the merchandise in front of establishments should be treated just like the tables on the sidewalks with safety requirements of it cannot extend more than 6' from the building, ample room (3') for pedestrians to walk, items in and out each day, and insurance naming the

Borough as an additional insured. Council is not opposed to this, but everyone needs treated the same.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the request from Deja-Me on Main, 532 Main Street, to place racks on the sidewalk in front of the building, was carried with a vote of six yea.

RECREATION

Ms. Roberts had nothing to report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston reported Sam Lynch, the Borough's financial consultant, was in last week to gather all the paperwork to begin work on the 2024 audit. Once it's in order, it will be given to Zelenkofske Axelrod to begin testing.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson had nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Non-Agenda Items

Mr. Phil Kiser voiced concern of hearing rumblings of the 2nd Avenue Sidewalk Project being completed. Two years ago when Council began discussing this project, the residents in the affected area were promised to be involved with the planning as to what would take place. Mr. Kiser stated no one has reached out to him at this point.

President Lapinto commented Council approved the agreement with EADS earlier tonight to begin working on this project; however, no definite design is prepared at this time. Public meetings will be held, and bidding of the project is not expected until next year.

Mr. Colosimo agreed the design and engineering will probably take the better part of a year.

President Lapinto confirmed residents will be notified.

Mr. Kiser recognizes the need for a sidewalk as pedestrians are currently walking through his yard but hopes there is a compromise between the Borough and the Kisers. Someone already mentioned to him that his fence is on the right-of-way. Twenty-six years ago, Bob Ragon, the

zoning officer, actually measured and marked where the fence was installed. If someone comes up to measure, Mr. Kiser would appreciate the opportunity to help them with it.

President Lapinto stated Mr. Wolf and Mr. Colosimo will work with Mr. Kiser. Also, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston has been looking through the permit files to see if this can be found.

Mr. Kiser appreciates it.

President Lapinto welcomed Ms. Elizabeth Fulmer back.

Ms. Fulmer stated trees.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Mr. Montana, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary