

December 3, 2024, Council Meeting
Minutes

The regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on December 3, 2024, 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. Chief Peck, Mr. Colosimo, Solicitor Marshall, Mr. Preston, Mayor Fulmer Vinson, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, approving the November 6, 2024, Council Meeting, minutes, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Whitling to approve the November 19, 2024, Council Meeting, minutes. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

Mr. Brian Summerville requested to be on the agenda but was not present.

ADMINISTRATION

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

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

President Lapinto announced the second meeting will be held on December 17, 2024, at 7 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Garbarino to give permission to advertise the 2025 Proposed Budget.

First off, President Lapinto thanked Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston for the countless hours that were put into the preparation of the budget and providing the information to the financial advisor. Now for the bad news, for the first time since 2015, there will be a 3-mill increase in taxes. President Lapinto stressed this Council has worked very hard to look at everything and to try to keep the taxes down. At the present time, the Borough will not be hiring another police officer, purchasing a police car, and is sad to say the millage to the Library is being cut down. Since the Borough is no longer mandated to have a curbside recycling program and due to the fact that the bids for another 5-year contract came in at \$70,000, that saved taxpayers from a 4-mill increase. The millage from library and from recycling will be put into the General Fund. President Lapinto commented one major expense included in the 2025 Budget is the replacement of the fire hall roof. Year-after-year, the roof has been patched, costing thousands and thousands of dollars. Council decided it is time to replace it. This

will be handled by getting a loan, where General Fund will pay 70% and the Fire Equipment Fund will pay 30% of it. Again, every member of Council and the Mayor were involved in this process. President Lapinto announced this town has two issues, which Councilmembers have absolutely no control over. One is the prices are going up, and the other is the amount of non-taxable property in the Borough. The Assessor's Office provided figures to Clarion Borough that indicate there is over \$154,612,717. However, of that amount, only \$39,702,932 is taxable. President Lapinto pointed out that leaves a taxable base of 25%. President Lapinto asked if any Councilmembers or the Mayor had anything to add.

Echoing President Lapinto's first sentence, Mr. Garbarino thanked Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston and understands it has been a challenge. The countless hours and time and keeping track of it all is amazing.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston thanked every Councilmember, Mayor, and staff as it couldn't be done without everyone's help.

Hearing no other comments, the motion to advertise the 2025 Proposed Budget was carried after the following roll call vote: Ms. Whitling, yes; Mr. Garbarino, yes; Ms. Logue, yes; Ms. Roberts, yes; Mr. Montana, yes; and, President Lapinto, yes.

Since the agenda is quite long, President Lapinto commented any questions will be taken at the end of the meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue, giving permission to seek request for proposals for 2025 Tax Anticipation Note in the amount of \$300,000, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue to adopt Ordinance #2024-848, Local Government Debt Act Ordinance of Council determining to incur lease rental debt by the guaranteed note in the maximum principal amount of \$357,547.86 to be authorized and issued by Clarion Borough Stormwater Authority in connection with the Center Place Storm Sewer Replacement in Clarion Borough.

President Lapinto asked Mr. Colosimo to verify this was a PennVEST Loan from 2019, which the Borough has been making the payment each month. CBSA has been reimbursing the Borough for the payment. President Lapinto understands PennVEST wants Clarion Borough out of this loan and to guarantee it, meaning CBSA will take over the payment.

Mr. Colosimo agreed that was correct.

The motion was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Whitling with a second by Ms. Roberts to give permission to issue a check to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the amount of \$61.17 for the filing fee for the LGUDA proceedings. The motion carried with a vote of six yeas.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving Resolution #2024-501, a resolution that the license fee for pop-ups and food vendors be reduced from \$50 to \$10 for the Clarion Summer Fest Event to be held June 7th, July 5th, and August 2nd, 2025, from 7 a.m. until 4 p.m., carried with a vote of six yeas.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Whitling to approve Resolution #2024-502, a resolution disposing of Borough records. The motion carried with a vote of six yeas.

As a reminder, President Lapinto stated the following terms will expire at the end of 2024: Jamie Phillips on the Zoning Hearing Board (3-year term); Jack Troese on the Planning Commission (4-year term); and Mike Kalinowski on both the Police and General Employees' Pension Committees (both 3-year term). These individuals will be contacted to see if they are interested in being re-appointed. Anyone interested should contact the Borough Office.

Other than the meeting in August (due to National Night Out) and November (election day), President Lapinto confirmed the Council Meetings are the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated that was correct.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving the Council Meeting and Second Council Meeting Dates for 2025 as the first and third Tuesday of each month, with the exception as stated above, at the Clarion Free Library at 7 p.m., was carried with a vote of six yeas.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Whitling, giving permission for Todd Colosimo to request Clarion County to drawdown CDBG funds to reimburse the Borough's General Fund in the amount of \$765.82 for Todd Colosimo's CDBG wages from November 26, 2023, through November 23, 2024, was carried with a vote of six yeas.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Whitling to ratify the purchase of a new furnace for the Public Works Building (office area) at a cost not to exceed \$4,100 from Husted Plumbing and Heating.

President Lapinto reported this was an emergency situation that needed repaired immediately.

When there is an emergency situation, Mr. Garbarino asked if the Borough didn't have to bid it out.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston believes the Department contacted the usual contractor, who wouldn't have gotten a new furnace for a couple of weeks. After reaching out to Husted Plumbing and Heating, the unit was available by Monday.

The motion carried unanimously.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

Mr. Montana understands no more meetings will be held until next year after the survey results have been gathered in the spring.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE

Ms. Logue announced the park is closed for the winter and will reopen April 1st.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN

Along with Ms. Logue, Ms. Whitling, and Mr. Garbarino, Mayor Fulmer Vinson stated they all participated with a group to help fluff the wreaths. Everything looks very nice. Mayor Fulmer Vinson thanked the Public Works Department for putting the wreaths and snowflakes on the light poles.

President Lapinto mentioned the trees in the park look very nice.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson commented a couple groups worked together to make Downtown look nice.

PUBLIC WORKS/STORM WATER AUTHORITY

Mr. Montana asked if Council has to approve the 2025 Storm Water Authority Board Budget?

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston realizes CBSA approved the budget but thinks Council has to as well. CBSA's budget is integrated into the Borough's proposed budget.

Solicitor Marshall thinks it is required under the terms of the Management Agreement.

On a motion by Mr. Montana with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the 2025 Storm Water Authority Board Budget, was carried with a vote of six yea.

Mr. Montana reminded everyone that Council will appoint/reappoint one position on the CBSA Board at the January 7, 2025, Council Meeting.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Roberts reminded everyone that the Snow Removal Ordinance went into effect December 1, 2024, and will continue through April 1, 2025. Everyone needs to pay attention to the streets.

As a reminder, Ms. Roberts stated free parking is in effect now through and including December 27th for the holiday season.

LIBRARY REPORT

If Clarion Area School District has a snow day, Mayor Fulmer Vinson reminded everyone the library will also be closed.

HOUSING AND ZONING

Ms. Logue announced if anyone is interested in being an alternate on the Zoning Hearing Board to contact the Borough Office.

Ms. Logue stressed the last recycling collection pick up will be Wednesday, December 18, 2024.

Ms. Logue reminded residents and business owners that they must remove snow/ice from their sidewalk within 24 hours of the last snow fall.

RECREATION

Ms. Roberts had nothing to report.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston thanked all members of Council and the Mayor for participating in all the meetings in order to get the proposed budget for 2025 ready.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston announced the Clarion County Board of Commissioners awarded Clarion Borough \$20,000 of the County Liquid Fuels Funding to be used for the paving of North 6th Avenue and thanked the Commissioners. The Borough submitted a request to the County for \$30,000 but will be able to pay the additional \$10,000 as part of the paving project.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson congratulated the Wildcats Football Team and looks forward to cheering them on. Everyone wishes the team nothing but the best and good luck on Friday.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Non-Agenda Items

There were none.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR POTENTIAL LITIGATION

President Lapinto called for an Executive Session for potential litigation, including all Councilmembers, the Mayor, the Solicitor, Mr. Colosimo, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston, beginning at 7:17 p.m.

President Lapinto called the meeting back to order at 7:29 p.m.

Solicitor Marshall reported no official action will be taken after the Executive Session that was held.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Roberts, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary