

September 2, 2025, Council Meeting  
Minutes

The regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on September 2, 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. Himes, Mr. Colosimo, Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Chief Peck, Mr. Wolf, Solicitor Marshall, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present. Mr. Preston was absent.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue, approving the August 6, 2025, Council Meeting, minutes, was carried with a vote of six yea.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items Only

There were none.

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Fulmer Vinson presented a proclamation to Starla Purinton, representing Daughters of the American Revolution, proclaiming the week of September 17-23, 2025, as Constitution Week, and aged all citizens to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through the guardian of our liberties, remembering that lost rights may never be regained.

ADMINISTRATION

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Roberts, approving the appropriations for the month of September, 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 for everyone's review.

President Lapinto announced the second meeting will be held on September 16, 2025, at 7 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library, if necessary.

President Lapinto reported the next group of motions are relating to the Borough's pension plans, which occur every year. If Ms. Whitling has any questions since this is her first year, President Lapinto encouraged her to do so.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue to approve Resolution #2025-507, a Resolution reducing the police pension contributions from 5% to 0% for the year 2026. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue to approve the Minimum Municipal Obligation for the Clarion Borough Police Pension Plan for 2026 in the amount of \$0.

President Lapinto explained for Ms. Whitling that every September Clarion Borough has to approve the MMO, or minimum municipal obligation, that the Borough is required to put that amount of money into the pension plans. The Police Pension Plan is fully funded, so it is zero.

The motion carried unanimously.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue to approve Resolution #2025-508, a Resolution reducing the general employees' pension plan contributions from 5% to 2.5% for the year 2026.

President Lapinto commented the General Employees' Pension Plan is not as well funded.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue to approve the Minimum Municipal Obligation for the Clarion Borough General Employees' Pension Plan for 2026 in the amount of \$68,976.

President Lapinto informed Ms. Whitling the money comes from the State and is foreign insurance money and asked Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston if the Borough has heard how much will be received this year?

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated nothing has been received yet on how much the Borough will receive this year. The money is usually received in October of each year. Once received, the money needs to be transferred into a qualified pension plans. If the Borough receives more than what is needed in each plan, the Borough must deposit it into those plans and has been dividing it evenly between the two.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino, approving the special event request from Clarion Blueprint Community for amplified sound exception for a community event at 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Park to be held September 6, 2025, from 12-7 p.m. (planning to have DJ'd music from 4-7 p.m. for kids), was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Roberts to approve the special event request from Clarion Blueprint Community for amplified sound exception for a Movie in the Park to be held October 17, 2025, from 6-11 p.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Park – movie sound through speaker system approximately 7-9:30 p.m.). The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Whitling to approve One Digital (Medina, Ohio) as pension plan administrator.

President Lapinto commented Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston has been working hard on this for several months. Wells Fargo Advisors notified the Borough that they will not be able to continue providing services for the plans. Due to Act 44, the Borough had to bid it out.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston reported a total of 6 were received, with 4 being interviewed.

President Lapinto reported Mr. Colosimo; Mr. Montana, Mr. Barry Sweet, member of both of the Pension Committees, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston; Carrie Troutman, the Borough actuary representative from Acrisure; and herself interviewed the companies. Ms. Troutman guided the sessions so everyone knew what to ask and respond to. After much consideration, the Committee recommends One Digital.

The motion carried with a vote of five yea with Mr. Garbarino abstaining.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Roberts to approve the proposal for 17 Standard Cisco Duo Essentials Edition Plus 17 Cisco Duo Basic Support for a total cost for one year of \$2,040, labor included.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston thinks this is the last item the police needed to have done to meet all the audit requirements for the findings last year at this time. Basically when someone logs into their computer, it will ask for another form of authentication. It is extra protection for cyber security.

Chief Peck stated the State listed this as a finding and required two ways of authentication to log onto the computer.

Even though it was just a finding for the police, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston noted the administrative computers will also be included as well.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Garbarino, un-tabling to motion from last month to approve the public bidding and procurement of services to complete Clarion Borough Contract 2025-1 Fire Department Building Roof Replacement Project, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue to approve the public bidding and procurement of services to complete Clarion Borough Contract 2025-1 Fire Department Building Roof Replacement Project.

Ms. Roberts thought it was tabled, because the estimate came in way over what was budgeted.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston commented this was discussed in the Public Works Committee. After some discussion, the members feel it is best to bid it out to find out what the cost will actually be. The bid may also include that the work will be done in the Spring of 2026, meaning the excess money could be included in the 2026 budget.

The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

#### EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY COMMITTEE

Mr. Montana had nothing to report.

#### BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE

Ms. Logue had nothing to report.

#### DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN

Mr. Crooks informed everyone the Bingo Bonanza event to raise money for decorations was a great success. A letter was also sent solicitor funds. Over 30 different businesses provided funds as sponsors. Mr. Crooks announced over \$5,000 was raised. The Committee is currently doing an inventory of the wreaths and lights to see what will need to be purchased. Since most of these items come from China, the prices have jumped considerable from \$250 to \$459 for a 48" wreath. Mr. Crooks thanked everyone for their help and participate for this event.

#### PUBLIC WORKS/STORM WATER AUTHORITY

On a motion by Mr. Montana with a second by Mr. Garbarino, appointing Rick Staley to be a member of the Clarion Borough Stormwater Authority Board to complete the vacant term to expire the first Monday in January 2028, was carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Mr. Montana with a second by Ms. Roberts, giving permission to send a letter to Clarion Area School District requesting additional funding towards the engineering fees for the TASA Project on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (engineering increased \$36,000 from original fee), carried with a vote of six yea.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Mr. Garbarino, accepting Scott Sharrar's resignation as Clarion Borough's Local Emergency Management Coordinator, effective August 12, 2025, was carried unanimously.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue to appoint Brett Whitling as Clarion Borough's Local Emergency Management Coordinator and submit the required paperwork to the County Department of Public Safety for completion. The motion carried with a vote of six yea.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Whitling, approving Halloween to be held on October 31, 2025, with trick-or-treat hours from 6-8 p.m. and parade line-up at 5:30 p.m., was carried unanimously.

On a motion by Ms. Roberts with a second by Ms. Logue, approving to hire Cole Wrhen as a probationary regular full-time police officer at an hourly rate of \$23.29 (70% of the standard base rate), contingent upon successful completion of required exams, was carried with a vote of six yea.

#### LIBRARY REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson shouted out to Susan Slike, who coordinated the power washing of the Clarion Free Library building, and also for decorating the building for the fall season. Ms. Slike's support to the library is outstanding and much appreciated.

#### HOUSING AND ZONING

Ms. Logue reminded everyone that small display/advertising signs are only permitted to be up for sixty (60) days and must have the date posted on the back of the sign, per Ordinance.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson asked what justifies a sign as small display/advertising signs and inquired if it is like her store one on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Main Street?

Ms. Logue agreed it would be. The signs are similar to the ones used during election season but for advertising purposes.

Mr. Montana questioned if directional signs count; for instance, Burford and Henry signs?

Ms. Logue recommended anyone with questions to contact the Zoning Officer for more details.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated the Borough received a question on the number of signs at certain locations, specifically 5<sup>th</sup> and Main.

President Lapinto commented some property owners were not happy that signs were placed without being notified. Some of the signs at 5<sup>th</sup> and Main have been up for a long, long time and it makes it look congested.

If the sign is up for 60 days and the business takes it down for a couple days, Mayor Fulmer Vinson asked if that would be okay?

Mr. Wolf stated technically that would be okay as long as the date on the back is new.

Ms. Whitling thinks the main concern was the display signs were being put up without asking businesses if it was okay to place them in front of their establishment or not. After the zoning officer looked into it, that's when it was discovered the signs can only be up for 60 days.

#### RECREATION

Ms. Roberts thanked Limestone Township Supervisors for their donation of \$250 for the Paul A. Weaver Community Park.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston commented the Exit Audit Meeting was held to go over the 2024 Audit. The audit has an unmodified opinion, which is the best opinion available.

Ms. Roberts thanked Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston for the good job.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston stated it is because of everyone involved not just herself.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson provided a shout out to Nancy Hanna and her fabulous committee for the Summer Fest event this year and thought everything went really well. Mayor Fulmer Vinson appreciates all the time and effort that goes into bringing people into town.

President Lapinto noted it is certainly growing.

### OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

### NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

### CITIZEN COMMENTS: Non-Agenda Items

Mr. James Crooks, 321 Wood Street, informed Council the Borough has a big problem with stray cats. There has to be at least 15 strays on Wood Street alone.

Ms. Logue stated it's more like 30.

Mr. Crooks reported there is a yellow Tom cat, who kills the small male cats, as he wants all the females to himself. People think they are helping the cats out by feeding them, but that only exasperates the problem. Mr. Crooks has found wounded and/or dead cats on his lawn or porch. Everyday there are cats on his porch. It is very hard to get rid of the cat odor. Mr. Crooks suggested Council should create an ordinance that prohibits people from feeding stray cats. Not only are cats drawn to his porch, but this past week a full-grown possum came on it followed by a raccoon. Last year was bad, but this year is worse. It's a major problem.

President Lapinto asked Chief Peck for comments?

Chief Peck stated Mr. Crooks is probably right it is a problem but it's not a police issue. Council did discuss this years ago, but there wasn't anything that could be done about cats.

Ms. Logue reported she has been working with a girl down in Sligo that has done a wonderful job with a catch and release program. The individual spays and neuters the cats and then brings back to where they were captured. Ms. Logue plans to discuss this at the committee meetings this month about possibly sponsoring a program like this. One cat can repopulate like 5,000 kittens in a couple years. Ms. Logue agrees it is a big issue and also had one die on her property.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston isn't sure the Borough could do that, but it can be looked into.

Ms. Logue asked Mr. Crooks if he would be willing to have a cage in his yard to catch the stray cats?

Mr. Crooks stated yes but wonders who to call if skunks, possums, or raccoons are caught instead?

Ms. Logue commented the organization will come and get the cages. Again, the cats will be spayed or neutered and then brought back and released. This will at least cut down the population. PAWS does not have the space for any more cats/kittens.

Ms. Roberts reported cats are considered an invasive species and are killing songbirds.

Ms. Cindy Miller, 208 Greenville Avenue, stated that's why she is present tonight as well. After going to the Borough Building, Ms. Miller was informed nothing can be done with cats. If Council wanted to enforce rules, there are a lot of things that can be done. It's not a popular thing. Riding her bike through town for years, Ms. Miller knows where the cats are laying in people's yards and where they run out in front of her. These cats do not have collars on. Ms. Miller thought cats had to be licensed too. If not, maybe Council should create an ordinance that cats do need to be licensed. Ms. Miller voiced her opinion that ever since everyone started letting all the Section 8 people come to the Borough, this problem has gotten worse. The people come in, bring their cat, and rent for a while. When they move, they leave their cats behind. If people are going to rent in Clarion Borough and bring a cat, Ms. Miller feels they should have to show proof they are fixed. Someone should go around and check to make sure the cats are licensed and/or fixed. Ms. Miller stressed it is not right for the residents of Clarion Borough to have to take care of stray cats just to try to solve this problem and questioned how many a resident should have to pay for? Again, these cats are always in the same area of town and carry diseases, do their businesses in flower beds, and lay around the houses. Ms. Miller doesn't know the answer but something definitely needs to be done.

Chief Peck thinks New Bethlehem Borough had an ordinance, which Council reviewed, but nothing could be done.

Ms. Roberts remembers that, because a resident off of Third Avenue had a house full of cats, and the Committee was looking into leash laws and licensing for cats but wasn't successful in figuring anything out at the time.

Mr. Crooks informed Council his brother is the solicitor in Gettysburg, where they adopted an ordinance that it is against the law to feed animals.

Ms. Roberts inquired what happens when a property owner has a cat that is outdoor and you are feeding your own cat?

Ms. Logue stated her cat is outdoors most of the time and comes in a couple hours a day.

Ms. Roberts reported it might be a problem to create an ordinance that people cannot put food out because how would you differentiate between and outside cat versus feeding a stray cat?

Ms. Logue reported Council will look into it.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

---

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary