

February 3, 2026, Council Meeting  
Minutes

The regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on February 3, 2026, in the Clarion Free Library. President Lapinto called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were Mr. Harbaugh, Ms. Whitling, Mr. Garbarino, Ms. Logue, Ms. Hampikian, and President Lapinto. Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Chief Peck, Solicitor Marshall, Mr. Colosimo, Mr. Preston, and Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston were also present.

First on the agenda tonight, President Lapinto stated is to hear presentations from the individuals who have expressed a desire to fill the 2-year term. Each person will be given 3 minutes to address Council, which will be timed. The order of the presentations will be the way received by Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston. President Lapinto stated number 1 is Sarah MacBeth.

Ms. Sarah MacBeth, 641 Liberty Street, started off stating she understands she may not have a good majority of Councilmembers' votes, which is okay, and asked each one to listen not because they have to but what she plans to say is important. Shortly after graduating from Clarion University, Ms. MacBeth made Clarion her home and has resided here for about 14 years and loves living here. Being a student in the Borough, renting in the Borough, working in the Borough, and now being a homeowner and raising a family in the Borough, Ms. MacBeth feels very strongly about this town and is a huge supporter of small and local businesses when she is not working. The Borough has a lot of problems, which she feels very qualified to help with in any way possible. Ms. MacBeth has a huge passion for volunteering, which being a member of Council is a volunteer role. If volunteering could be done for a living, Ms. MacBeth stated she would. Outside of that, Ms. MacBeth works in banking and finance for about 11 years and is very good at that, which would be very helpful for the Borough to help with financial decisions and business-making decisions. This is what she does every single day. Rasing a family is the future of Clarion, which Ms. MacBeth feels is very important, and hopes that her children will call Clarion their home someday. Politics and parties aside, Ms. MacBeth noted she'd be grateful to be on Borough Council and askes everyone for their vote. With the financial and business background, holding a lot of different roles in the Borough and understanding those perspectives, Ms. MacBeth voiced her determination that if the votes are not there tonight, she will be back if there is another vacancy or the next election. Ms. MacBeth thanked everyone for their time.

Mr. Garbarino commented he has been fortunate enough to be on other various boards with Ms. MacBeth and noted she has been an asset to the community and her efforts are appreciated.

President Lapinto added she has had the pleasure of knowing her since she was a very young girl and put her on Blueprint, where she is now the President.

Hearing no other questions or comments, President Lapinto called on Eric Funk, Jr.

Mr. Eric Funk, Jr. thanked Council for the opportunity to speak this evening. Mr. Funk was born and raised in Clarion and lives in the Borough. Mr. Funk stressed how passionate he is about the

future of the Borough and making it a place that the next general wants to live in. Professionally, Mr. Funk is the Development Director for the PA Wilds Center, where he focuses on strengthening rural communities through economic development, strategic investment, long-term planning, and on a regular basis works with municipalities, business owners, residents, and regional planners to secure funding for major complex project to ensure limited resources are being used responsibly. In the past, serving as the Community Development Coordinator for the Clarion County Economic Development Corporation and with the Regional Main Street Manager for a few years provided him with a strong understanding of the challenges local municipalities, whether that is balancing budgets, pursuing grant funding, or making smart private-public partnerships work, which is very difficult. Mr. Funk, Jr., reported the core of his work is to focus on economic development and community development to improve quality of life, support local businesses, attract investment, and making sure growth is thoughtful and strategic not rushed and reactive. Outside of work, Mr. Funk, Jr., is a member of the Executive Board for the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors for United Way of Clarion County and Clarion County Safe, the Capital Campaign Committee for the Clarion Alley Cats, who do a great job, and involvement with The Local Clarion County Summer Fest and Christmas activities. If Council would appoint him to this vacancy, Mr. Funk, Jr., would approach it in a bipartisan, collaborative way, and wants to see the Borough succeed. Everyone knows the challenges the Borough has, especially with the limited tax base. With his experience with state and federal partners as well as grant opportunities, Mr. Funk, Jr., believes he could help diversify the Borough's revenue streams, which is something he is very passionate about to help take the burden off the Borough so the work the public wants to be done can be. Mr. Funk, Jr., thanked everyone, again, for the opportunity to speak.

Hearing no questions or comments, President Lapinto called on Andy Montana.

Mr. Andy 'Ace' Montana, owner/broker of Ace Montana Realty at 613 Main Street, purchased the Corbett building 8 years ago in October 2018 and has been a resident of Clarion Borough since his birth 70 years ago. As far as education, Mr. Montana earned a mechanical drafting degree from Butler Community College in 1976, a real estate finance business degree with a minor in philosophy in May of 1997 for Clarion University, and opened Ace Montana Realty in June 2008. While being employed at his shoe repair shop, Mr. Montana stated his father drilled into him at a very young age of 9 the main objective when dealing with the public is to first always provide a service, whether it be self-employment, as an employee, volunteer of an organization, or whenever one of the affiliated and serving under the capacity of a member of a board or council. Whenever one makes a commitment to serve in that capacity, they must be disciplined to fulfill his obligations made and not waiver. Mr. Montana has been a member of the Clarion Borough Stormwater Authority Board for the past 1½ years, which is very important to be a member of both to serve as a liaison to communicate between the Clarion Borough Council and the Clarion Borough Stormwater Authority Board. The person that Clarion Borough chooses to fulfill the vacancy of the appointment must base their decision on what is in the best interest of the residents and taxpayers of Clarion Borough and free from any party affiliations or friendships and their own party or political views. Mr. Montana feels the person must be able to be willing to make tough decisions, which others fear due to the local fallout and loss of friends. The person appointed must be comfortable with and present themselves well when asked to meet with the

constituents of the Clarion Borough, at the properties, and other venues, which he has consistently done during his 3 years serving on Borough Council. Mr. Montana commented the opportunity to serve on Clarion Borough Council is a privilege and must be treated as one. As a commitment, which is not be self-serving, it should not be used for a future personal gain. The taxpayers and residents of Clarion Borough are situated under the same umbrella, which is Clarion Borough, and all deserve equal representation, which should be, and not swayed by political affiliation, friendships, or social economical status. Mr. Montana thanked everyone for the opportunity for allowing him to speak.

Hearing no questions or comments, President Lapinto called on Terrance Bean.

Mr. Terrance Bean pointed out Council has some really good candidates and decided to express interest to get appointed to Council, because he's been coming to these meetings for a couple years. Sitting and watching a seat on Council be vacant for a year, Mr. Bean questioned 'why isn't somebody there' and believes if he is going to complain or say anything about the Borough, he needs to step up and be willing to take the headaches. The past is the past, and some activities ranged from Little League, to his random business, and working a part-time job. Mr. bean thinks the one piece that he can offer the Board is looking at things from a perspective that says it's not as easy as you think it is, and it's not as cut and dried as it might seem. Although the tax base pretty well drained at this point, everyone needs to acknowledge that and be able to say 'here's some ways that we can assist in doing that'.

President Lapinto asked for a motion?

Ms. Logue made a motion to appoint Andy Montana to fill the vacancy on Council. Mr. Garbarino seconded the motion.

Before the vote, Mr. Garbarino stated all the candidates are very well qualified and doesn't want any thoughts of inadequacy. Personally, Mr. Garbarino doesn't like the appointment process, but it's a necessary evil. If everyone looks at the votes, Mr. Garbarino noted Mr. Montana would have been the next vote getter, which is where his logic came from. Mr. Garbarino again asked all the candidates not to take this personally and genuinely appreciated having a turn out for this vacancy. It's been years where there has been very little interest in this role. So, to see the number that expressed interest is very exciting. Mr. Garbarino thanked each for coming out and giving a presentation.

President Lapinto asked for a roll call vote.

The motion carried after the following roll call vote: Mr. Harbaugh, no; Ms. Whitling, yes; Mr. Garbarino, yes; Ms. Logue, yes; Ms. Hampikian, no; and President Lapinto, yes.

President Lapinto congratulated Mr. Montana and encouraged everybody to run in future elections. It was great to see the ballot full of candidates to vote for this year.

Mr. Harbaugh stated credit also needs given to Ms. MacBeth that while going through the voting process was going to attend the candidate forum; however, her daughter got sick that day and was not able. Mr. Harbaugh appreciated the fact that Ms. MacBeth was willing to step up and answer public questions and looks forward to her being on the ballot next year as well as anybody else that is interested. Like Mr. Bean expressed, if you are willing to speak up on issues, you have got to put yourself on the grill so to speak. Mr. Harbaugh really appreciated that from everyone tonight.

At this point, the Affidavit of Residency was completed by Mr. Montana by Ms. Logue.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson issued the Oath of Office to Mr. Montana; after which, Mr. Montana took his seat.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Hampikian, approving the minutes for the January 5, 2026, Organization Meeting, January 5, 2026, Council Meeting, January 20, 2026, Public Hearing, and January 20, 2026, Council Meeting, was carried unanimously.

#### CITIZEN COMMENTS: Agenda Items

There were none.

#### ADMINISTRATION

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

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

President Lapinto announced, if necessary, the second Council Meeting will be held February 17, 2026, in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library at 7 p.m. At this time, there is no need.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Hampikian, appointing The EADS Group, Inc., as Borough Engineer for 2026 at the rate chart included in the packet, carried unanimously.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Harbaugh to approved Resolution #2026-517, a resolution revising the request for a Statewide Local Share Assessment Grant to be used for purchase of truck with snow plow and salt spreader.

Mr. Harbaugh commented the Borough has been trying for 2 years now to get this grant to replace a Public Works truck that is continually breaking down and nickel-and-diming the Borough. The first resolution was too specific, and this revision makes it more generic so that the Borough, if approved, isn't locked into detailed specifications. Mr. Harbaugh, as well as the Public Works employees, would love to see this be awarded. And it would be a benefit to the residents as well as the new truck would be more efficient.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

President Lapinto stated next is an annual request from Delta Zeta Sorority for their 5K Run/Walk event. However, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston noticed the date on their insurance certificate indicated the event occurring on April 11<sup>th</sup>. After checking, the organizer confirmed the correct date is April 11<sup>th</sup>.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, approving Delta Zeta Sorority's special event request for their 5K Run/Walk event to be held on April 11, 2026, from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m., was carried with a vote of seven yeas.

President Lapinto publicly thanked Clarion Township for their donation of \$5,000 for the Fire Hall Roof Replacement Project. This is much appreciated.

#### BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE

Ms. Logue had nothing to report at this time but stated a meeting will be held this month.

Ms. Sarah MacBeth agreed and added work continues on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Park Project.

#### DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN

There was nothing to report.

#### PUBLIC WORKS/STORM WATER AUTHORITY

Mr. Harbaugh encouraged motorists to slow down on Frampton Street due to extra pedestrian traffic during the school year. The elementary students walk up the stairs and get to that area of the Borough. Some parents are waiting to get their child/children, but the others walk home using the streets. After receiving some concerned parents' calls, Mr. Harbaugh stated it's really about keeping them safe. This will help the parents and their nerves as parents.

Mr. Harbaugh shouted out to the Public Works employees, Doug, Chris, Eric, and Keaton, on the great job they performed with the recent snow storm. Also, to all the contractors that helped with the Department load and haul or just haul snow from the town. It was really nice to see everybody rally together for the storm that is hopefully once in a lifetime. Just being in Pittsburgh earlier this week, their streets don't look as good as Clarion Borough's, and they have a lot more equipment and employees. The Department deserves credit for their work.

Mr. Harbaugh announced the stormwater bills are being prepared and should be out soon.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Logue reminded everyone the Snow Removal Ordinance began December 1<sup>st</sup> and continues until April 1, 2026.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Whitling, approving to terminate Christina Myers from the position of Meter Enforcement Officer, effective immediately, carried unanimously.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Garbarino, giving permission to request the Civil Service Commission to create an eligibility list, carried with a vote of seven yea.

#### LIBRARY REPORT

On a request by the library director, Mayor Fulmer Vinson informed everyone an event, Take Your Child to the Library Day, will be held on Saturday from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. There will be stories, scavenger hunts, crafts, and other fun things to do that day.

#### HOUSING AND ZONING

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

On a motion by Ms. Whitling with a second by Mr. Garbarino, accepting the resignation of Joseff J. Wolf as Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer, effective January 23, 2026, was carried with a vote of seven yea.

Mr. Garbarino thanked Mr. Wolf for his service.

On a motion by Ms. Whitling with a second by Ms. Hampikian to give permission to advertise for a Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer at a rate to be determined. The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

#### RECREATION

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Whitling to approve Clarion Conservation District's special event request for environmental education/community event: "Water Workshop" to be held on June 13, 2026, from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the Toby Boat Launch, contingent on not blocking the entrances/exits/boat launch.

President Lapinto asked Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston to explain the next request.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston received a special event request from Hannah Bequeath, education and outreach coordinator with the Clarion Conservation District, in reference to a water workshop that she wishes to hold at Toby Boat Launch. This request was also submitted to Brookfield Power, who also has to give permission to use this area. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston commented it will cover topics such as water quality and how to assess a stream, aquatic organisms, a stream study lesson including information on stream restoration, aquatic invasive species, updates on what is being done in Clarion County watersheds, and an overview on what the Clarion County Conservation District does and the programs that they have to help the water resources. It sounds like it will be a good event. The Conservation District plans to take participants down on a bus and let them out at the launch area down near the water but assured nothing would be blocked. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary thinks the upper parking area will be used for events as well.

President Lapinto stated Mr. Garbarino may not be too happy with the number of people in the area.

Mr. Garbarino commented he is happy when people are down at the Toby Boat Launch and encourages people to attend.

The motion carried unanimously.

#### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston continues to complete annual and year-end reports.

As Mr. Harbaugh mentioned, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston reported the first quarter 2026 CBSA bills were prepared and will be mailed later this week but thanked Julie Dunlap, police secretary, and Kathy Stroop, the meter enforcement officer, for all their help that were a big part on how this was possible.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston thanked the Public Works and Police Departments for all their work with the snow storm and unending police calls.

#### MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson thanked the Public Works employees, too, for all their hard work.

#### OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

#### NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

#### CITIZEN COMMENTS: Non-Agenda Items

There were none.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Mr. Harbaugh, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

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Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary