

March 3, 2026, Council Meeting
Minutes

The regular meeting of Clarion Borough Council was held on March 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, Mr. Montana, 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.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, approving the minutes for the February 3, 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. Hampikian, approving the appropriations for the month of March, carried with a vote of seven yeas.

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

President Lapinto announced the second Council Meeting, if necessary, will be held March 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. Logue to give permission to advertise a Public Meeting to be held on April 21, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Clarion Free Library to present the Second Avenue Project and answer questions.

Since Clarion Area is a big part of this project, Mr. Harbaugh thinks it would be good to mention this meeting to them as well.

President Lapinto already informed the school of the date and time, and it will be announced at their School Board meeting tonight. President Lapinto was assured representatives will be present.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, approving Spc. Ross A. McGinnis VFW's special event request for Memorial Day Services to be held May 25, 2026, from 11 a.m. until Noon at the Clarion Cemetery (annual request), was carried with a vote of seven yeas.

President Lapinto stated the next request is new and from the First Baptist Church to close 7th Avenue to hold a community event for their 150th celebration, which is on April 12, 2026. President Lapinto thought maybe the Church would have contacted the Mayor for a proclamation.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson stated they did.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston reported it will be given at the April Council Meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Harbaugh to approve the First Baptist Church of Clarion's special event request for street closure of 7th Avenue from Main Street to Liberty Street on April 11, 2026, from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. for a community event at the Church for their 150th year celebration, which is April 12, 2026. The motion carried with a vote of seven yeas.

On a motion by Ms. Whitling with a second by Mr. Harbaugh, approving the First Baptist Church of Clarion's special event request for street closure of 7th Avenue from Main Street to Liberty Street on June 19, 2026, from 3 to 9 p.m. for their annual block party, was carried with a vote of seven yeas.

President Lapinto reported a meeting was held last week on the PA 250 Mural with Eric Funk, Jr., as Chair; Mayor Fulmer Vinson, Mr. Colosimo, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston, and herself. At that time, the Borough was informed of a grant opportunity through the PA Wilds Group up to \$15,000. If received, that would give the Borough \$25,000 towards the mural. President Lapinto added additional core committee members will be Jim Crooks; Melanie Parker, as the historian; and Jake Jacobson and his son, Kirk. In discussion, it was noted there are a lot of great artists in the area. President Lapinto asked any artist interested in participating in this project to contact Mr. Colosimo. The next big step to determine is the location. Another meeting will be held with all members to continue working on this project.

Mayor Fulmer Vinson thanked Mr. Funk, Jr., for letting the Borough know about this additional grant that is available. This would really help with the project and make it extra special.

President Lapinto asked Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston to report on the request from The Alley Cats in reference to the trees along Main Street.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston announced a meeting was held last week with representatives of The Alley Cats, Mr. Preston, Mr. Colosimo, President Lapinto, and herself to discuss the upcoming season. Additional funding is available for four new planters to be put in place by Terra Works before the planting season. The Alley Cats also relayed that Kronospan has a tree planting program, which they will purchase and plant trees in communities and are asking the Borough remove 11 trees along Main Street with 9 being replaced. Two of the trees will not be replaced as a new planter will go in each spot. Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston added the only thing the Borough would have to do is remove the 11 trees. There have been conflicting feelings that some of the stamped brick around the trees and/or sidewalks may be damaged as the roots will also need to be removed. Because of that, the Public Works Department will start with one of the biggest trees, the one in front of Shirey's True Value Hardware, to see how easy it can be removed and to ensure no damage will be done. The Borough does not have the funds to replace the decorative and regular concrete

sidewalks. If all goes well, the remaining trees will be removed. Kronospan wishes to plant by the end of March no later than early April.

Mr. Aaron Stonecypher asked what type of tree will be planted?

Mayor Fulmer Vinson believes it is a Brandywine Maple.

Mr. Stonecypher inquired if the current trees are doing any damage to the sidewalk?

President Lapinto stated some of the trees are dead. Historically, Main Street trees have a short life span mainly because of the weather and salt. The Borough is grateful to have new trees planted.

Mr. Stonecypher questioned why put new trees in at all. In other words, don't waste the money to put them in if they are going to die in a few years. Mr. Stonecypher asked unless there is a plan to keep the new trees from dying. If not, it will be a repeat cycle; plant, die, cut down, and replace.

Mr. Jim Crooks thinks the current trees have been in 20-25 years.

Mr. Stonecypher questioned what the expense will be?

President Lapinto stated the Borough is not paying for the trees; Kronospan has a tree program.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston commented the Public Works Department will be taking the trees out. There are no funds to repair any stamped brick or concrete if it is damaged, but the Alley Cats indicated they have funds to handle that. Kronospan has a tree program that will be free to the Borough. They will get the trees, plant, and mulch them.

Ms. Logue stated that The Alley Cats are asking that this be done.

Mr. Garbarino feels this is a moot point at this point.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Hampikian, approving a request from Brian Burford for a support letter for a mini-grant application through the PA Wilds for a stone wall and sign at the corner of 5th Avenue and Main Street (formerly Bob's Sub Shop), carried with a vote of seven yea.

BLUEPRINT COMMITTEE

Ms. Logue had nothing to report.

DESTINATION CLARION DOWNTOWN

Mr. Jim Crooks expressed the Downtown businesses are grateful for the Public Works Department with all the challenges this winter not just with the snow removal but also getting

the Christmas decorations down in a very timely matter. If they would have waited one more week, the decorations would have been up a month longer. Mr. Crooks thanked the Public Works and Borough Council for supporting them with the quick removal of snow from the parking spaces along Main Street. Had that not been done, the businesses would have had to remain closed. Everyone appreciates the employees' efforts.

PUBLIC WORKS/STORM WATER AUTHORITY

Mr. Harbaugh stated the bid results for the Clarion Borough 2025-1 Fire Department Building Roof Replacement Project were opened late last week. A total of 5 bids were received and are currently being reviewed by the engineers. Action is anticipated at the April Council Meeting. The bids were pretty positive, which doesn't happen too often.

President Lapinto stated she was pleasantly surprised at the amount of the bids. It came in quite a bit lower than anticipated.

Mr. Harbaugh agreed it was a positive bid opening.

Mr. Montana announced the position of Administrative/Stormwater Assistant is still vacant and encouraged individuals to apply. The hourly wage is \$16, which may not be as much as someone would want to start out at, but the benefit package is fantastic.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Mr. Montana reported the Committee met on February 16th and will meet again on March 16th at 6 p.m. at the Clarion County Administrative Building at 330 Main Street in the Commissioner's Conference Room. Everyone is welcome to attend. The Committee is still waiting on the results of the survey.

PUBLIC SAFETY

For the last time, Ms. Logue reminded everyone the Snow Removal Ordinance continues until April 1, 2026.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Whitling, giving permission to purchase 2026 police car, upfitting, and all accessories in the total cost of \$58,634.29 (through Co*Stars), was carried unanimously.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Garbarino to give permission for Todd Colosimo to seek request for proposal for the banks for a loan in the amount of \$58,634.29. The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Mr. Garbarino to accept the resignation, with regrets, from Lewis Armstrong, effective March 26, 2026.

President Lapinto stated Council and the Borough are really going to miss Mr. Armstrong.

The motion carried with a vote of seven yea.

LIBRARY REPORT

Mayor Fulmer Vinson pointed everyone to the Clarion Free Library's Facebook page to find out different activities and events that are being planned.

HOUSING AND ZONING

President Lapinto called on Ms. Hampikian to give a report on an update on the cat situation.

Ms. Hampikian very excitedly announced that Ms. Logue and she have been meeting with representatives from Clarion PAWS and Tri-County Animal Shelter. The Clarion Cat Initiative Group, or CCIG, is the name of the volunteers. The group is in the position where trapping will begin next week at some hotspots that were identified starting at the area around the glass plant, the problem on Wood Street, and then out by the University. Working with local vets and also low-cost clinics, Ms. Hampikian stated up to 50 cats a month can be done, which is really a significant number. A website is being built where people can volunteer, donate towards this effort, areas that need cats trapped, and some outreach and education materials. Ms. Logue is currently working on some waivers and forms. Donations are very much needed and will be tax deductible. Individuals can donate a lump sum; buy the specific traps necessary for this project; and/or sponsor a kitty, neuter for \$75, or spay for \$85. Ms. Hampikian announced the group is really hoping to make a huge difference in the cat population. Rolling clinics will also be done.

Mr. Ron Wilshire, exploreClarion, asked what happens after the cat is trapped?

Ms. Hampikian reported the cats will be spay or neutered, get ear-clipped so that the volunteers know they are already done, and then released back in the community. The only way you can control cat population is with the Trap-Neuter-Release Program, TNR Program. Relocating cats to other areas and banning people from feeding cats will not break the chain of breeding. Breaking that chain is the only way progress will be made. Ms. Hampikian pointed out this will not going to happen overnight and may be until next year at this time to see a reduction in the cat population. Other areas have had a real success with this program. At this time, there are about \$15,000 for donations, which will be able to do a lot of cats a month.

Mr. Garbarino highlighted the donations will definitely be tax deductible.

Ms. Logue added this is very organized and have a plan in place on how they will track the analytics and everything. The University is involved, and a student will be helping with this project. The long-term goal is to have the funding so that the organization will be able to apply for grants.

Ms. Hampikian thinks there might be a grant at the University that they can apply for. Continuing to get donations can expand this program into a long-term solution. Eventually down the road, providing vouchers for low-income households so that they can get their animals fixed is an idea. The hope is to encourage people to get their cats fixed in case they move and let their cat outside.

Ms. Logue added the Borough will be working with PAWS, and everything will be under their umbrella.

Mr. Crooks asked if residents are allowed to also trap cats, and, if so, who would they call?

Ms. Logue stated residents shouldn't do the trapping and should reach out to PAWS and/or Ms. Hampikian to have this done. Some of these cats may have diseases, and no one wants residents to get hurt.

Ms. Hampikian agreed and stated they will take care of the trapping, which needs done right before the clinic so someone can take the animal at that time. The cats will also be given rabies shots. This weekend the volunteers will be trained on how to trap cats, and it should begin next week. Also, if a cat is trapped and is ill and cannot be saved, the cat will be euthanized.

President Lapinto voiced amazement on the number of cats, between 100-200, running around by the glass plant.

RECREATION

On a motion by Ms. Logue with a second by Ms. Hampikian, approving United Way of Clarion County's special event request for baseball/softball tournaments to be held at Paul A. Weaver Community Park on July 24-26, August 7-9, and August 14-16, 2026, was carried with a vote of six yeas with Mr. Garbarino abstaining.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston informed everyone that the Borough received the Liquid Fuels Funds this week in the amount of \$125,695.12, which is \$2,009.53 less than what was received in 2025, and turn-back funds in the amount of \$1,320.

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. Jon Byer, 340 Liberty Street, reported he just purchased the Hager lot at the corner of Main Street at 2nd Avenue with the idea of putting food trucks on this lot. After stopping at the Borough Office, Mr. Colosimo stated there were plans to install parking in the right-of-way and inquired if this is the Borough or PennDOT's idea?

President Lapinto encouraged Mr. Byer to attend the public meeting on April 21st as this is part of the 2nd Avenue Project. Visuals will be available that night and individuals can address their concerns that night.

Mr. Byer agreed to attend the meeting and asked the next step for approval of that project?

Mr. Colosimo stated public parking will be installed along that lot, and it would be up to Council if it would be metered. That is not anticipated at this time.

Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary LaVan-Preston thinks the plans indicate a curb will be installed with parallel parking.

Ms. Logue suggested Mr. Byer should attend the meeting and see the projected plans.

Mr. Byer will attend but was instructed to come and ask Council.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

On a motion by Mr. Garbarino with a second by Ms. Logue, the meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Linda LaVan-Preston, Chief Administrative Officer/Borough Secretary