

**BOROUGH OF CLARKS SUMMIT
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 1, 2024**

The May 2024 Borough Meeting was conducted on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, at 7:00 P.M. The meeting was held in Borough Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, 304 South State Street, Borough of Clarks Summit, County of Lackawanna and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Council members in attendance were Ms. Gerrie Carey, Mr. Frank Besten, Ms. Roni Lopez, Mr. Robert Sheils, Mr. Steve Guza, Mr. Joshua Mitchell, Mayor Harry Kelly, Solicitor Andrew Krowiak and Borough Manager Ms. Virginia Kehoe. Kathleen Simrell was absent.

MEDITATION:

President Carey

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

President Carey

PRESENTATION TO POLICE:

Mike McClane

Clarks Summit VFW presented the police with a check for \$500. Clarks Summit Fire Department also received a check from the VFW.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE 2024-02 Joint Appeals Board President Carey

No comment from the public. Bob Sheils made the first motion to approve Ordinance 2024-02- Appeals Board, seconded by Roni Lopez, vote was 6-0.

CDBG PUBLIC HEARING – Joe Rovinsky CDBGfunds President Carey

Block Grant: \$385,000 is in the CDBG fund. Discussions in process on how to spend that money. Josh Mitchell discussed the expansion of the facilities at the Senior Center. Mr. Rovinsky stated that the application would go to the consultant then to the state for review.

Phyllis Zampella spoke to Council concerning paving on her street. Ms. Kehoe explained that Hickory Lane is not a priority because the road is not heavily used. That could sac is not heavily used.

Resident complained about the Stivala property at 401 ½ Winola Road. Jenn Basalyga has written a letter concerning the issues regarding this property.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

President Carey

Steve Guza made the first motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Roni Lopez, vote was 6/0.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Carey

N/A

3. PUBLIC COMMENT & INPUT:

President Carey

4. POLICE REPORT:

Mayor Kelly

Chris Yarns discussed the aggressive driving grant and the DUI grant. He discussed the heavy call volume in the last month. It has been very busy in the police department. Josh Mitchell discussed the cost of adding a new police officer. He stated that hiring a full timer would be a displacement of part time hours for full time hours. It is not a reduction in the total number of hours. Mr. Mitchell stated that it looks like the borough will just break even and the big question is where do they go from here. The Collective Bargaining Agreement has yet to be negotiated or ratified. Gerrie Carrie commented that the police are in desperate need of a full time officer as two have retired. Roni Lopez began to make the first motion, then Bob Sheils objected to the motion because it was not on the agenda concerning hiring a new police officer. He believed that is a major decision that would need to be on the agenda. It was left off the agenda and Virginia Kehoe assumed that this would be discussed in the police report. Ms. Kehoe stated that the next option would be to have a special meeting. Bob Sheils stated that he took a class concerning labor law. Don't make a move that has a meaningful economic impact down the road until you do your homework. He stated that there are many things to do before they go into a new Collective Bargaining Agreement, and we need to be aware of our financial situation. He stated that police unions across the state are asking for 8% to 10 % raises based on inflation. The budget needs to be balanced; we have the 4th highest tax burden in the county. Josh Mitchell stated that he is of the opinion that they need to expedite this process and when they have all of that information they need to move forward. They cannot continue this way indefinitely. He was previously opposed to hiring a new full-time officer but he has changed based on where they are at. He thinks Bob Sheils comments are prudent. Mr. Mitchell also pointed out that the chart Mr. Sheils was referring to that showed we are in the 4th highest tax burden in the county is not accurate due to the millage added for the garbage. This is not apples to apples. We are closer to South Abington Twp. Roni Lopez stated that the Chief doesn't have the time because he is drowning right now. Chief Yarns stated that a Collective Bargaining Agreement can take many months. Frank Besten asked Bob Sheils about the raises. Mr. Sheils stated that the police unions are asking for an 8% to 10% raise. Frank Besten asked if there is a clause in the contract for the police to go on strike. The answer is that the police cannot go on strike. Mr. Besten stated that this has been kicked down the road for years. We have an excellent officer who is available for the full time position and he does not need the medical insurance. Mr. Mitchell stated that it would benefit us to know what the union is asking for. A new part time officer is a bargaining chip also. The chief will let Officer Yetkowskas know that they need the proposal asap.

5. BIDS & QUOTATIONS:

President Carey

N/A

6. BOROUGH TREASURER'S REPORT:

President Carey

N/A

7. **VENDOR PAYMENTS TO BE RATIFIED:** **President Carey**
Josh Mitchell made the first motion to pay the bills, seconded by Steve Guza, vote was 6-0.

8. **OLD BUSINESS:** **President Carey**

Sewer Report – APRIL: Jenn Basalyga stated that payments are steadily coming in.
Trash Report – First quarter: The billing is newer so it is difficult to say where they are at at this time.

Ordinance 2024-02 - Joint Board of Appeals: done.

Pave Cut Ordinance decisions: These items are done through resolution. The ordinance has already been approved. This should go to the Public Safety Committee to review, then Council can vote.

1. Our ordinance allows for a 10% markup on invoicing over and above the amount charged by IWDA. Do we want to take advantage of that?
2. Currently we bill \$300 for a pave cut permit. We still want to bill a flat rate, but \$300 seems excessive in addition to the costs from IWDA. By next week I will have examples of what other firms using IWDA are billing so we can make a decision and pass a resolution on the updated amount.
3. Lou will be sending over examples of pave cut permit applications. We need to decide if our current application is sufficient or do we want to change it. If so, how?
4. IWDA will offer us a reduced price if we would like them to do compaction testing on the companies that we contract with for paving. That is currently not being done. It would be an additional expense. Would we like to take advantage of this?
5. When a utility is doing a capital improvement (e.g. PAWC is replacing their lines on an entire block or more), we can require that in advance they supply the Borough with their engineered specifications for our engineer to review. Again, this would be an additional expense, but new have no controls in place currently.

9. **NEW BUSINESS:** **President Carey**

- **Hannah Siddiqui – Junior Council:** Bob Sheils made the first motion to approve Ms. Siddiqui, seconded by Roni Lopez, vote was 6-0.

10. **SOLICITORS REPORT:** Nothing to report.

11. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

- **Railroad sale of land:** Ms. Kehoe stated that the railroad received an offer of \$75,000. If the borough wanted the land, we would have to bid higher. Bob Sheils asked what we would do with the land. Gerrie Carey stated that the Millett's might be interested. Jenn Basalyga stated that she sent information to the Millett's.

Bob Sheils stated the Clarks Summit Borough is currently 4th in the county with the highest tax burden. He thinks that this is something that needs to be improved

on. He asked that when they need to make a decision concerning finances, they need to be good stewards with the taxpayer's money. Gerrie Carey stated that the information also included the school taxes. Our taxes are higher with the school tax. Josh Mitchell stated that is you take the 13 ½ mills out for garbage out of our assessed millage we are comparable to South Abington Twp., and we have services that they do not. If any residents or members of Council want to see us cut our takes, please bring forward a proposal showing the services they are willing to give up. Ms. Kehoe stated that the article shows that tax payment for the borough is just over \$500 a year. The school and county taxes make up the reset of the taxes. The last tax raise was 2019 for the fire company.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS:

President Carey

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| • Prior- | N/A |
| • During- | N/A |
| • Subsequent- | N/A |

ADJOURN:

President Carey

Council recessed the meeting.