

**BOROUGH OF CLARKS SUMMIT  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING RECONVENE  
MAY 29, 2024**

The May 2024 Borough Meeting was recessed and reconvened Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at 7:00 P.M. The meeting was held in Borough Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 304 South State Street, Borough of Clarks Summit, County of Lackawanna and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Council members in attendance were Ms. Gerrie Carey, Ms. Roni Lopez, Mr. Steve Guza, Mr. Robert Sheils, Mr. Joshua Mitchell, Mr. Frank Besten, Borough Manager Virginia Kehoe, Solicitor Andrew Krowiak, Mayor Harry Kelly, Junior Council people Mr. McVety and Ms. Siddiqui. Ms. Simrell was absent.

**1. OPEN**

Bob Sheils stated there were folks from the public at the meeting. He wanted to hear from them before the vote or making a motion. Eric Williams began speaking, was asked to stand at the podium so we have him on record; Mr. Williams continued speaking without standing at the podium. He stated his name stated that he was not anti-police, just more fiscally responsible. He stated that this is a contract with the police department, why are they even looking into something like this. He asked the finance company if there is money to do this. Ransom did not come onboard. Ms. Kehoe asked that he stand at the podium. Mr. Williams responded that he had already said his name. Roni Lopez also asked Mr. Williams to go to the podium. Ms. Carey stated that he cannot be seen from the audience. Mr. William's response was, "They can hear me." He said he feels more comfortable sitting than standing. Mr. Williams stated that he understands the police are doing extra patrols, he suggested instead having different shifts. The police have six-part timers. The last time he was in the department, the chief said they were drowning in work. Mr. Williams does not think there is that kind of call volume. He suggested getting the contract done then go from there. There is always Waverly, South Abington and Dalton there. Bob Sheils asked about a 12 hour shift for the police and does Mr. Williams think that is a hinderance. Mr. Williams said absolutely. Chief Yarns stated that as an example that evening, officer Ryan Williams is scheduled for 11-pm to 7 am, an 8 hour shift and this doesn't seem to be a problem for the police. If the officer cannot work the 12 hours then they make accommodations. Chief Yarns stated that they are up to 2200 calls so far this year. It is not even half way through the year. We are running 200 to 300 more a year as of 2024. The calls are put in from the comm center. Frank Besten stated that he was surprised that Mr. Williams was at the meeting after all of his years in the police department, saying that he was probably the highest paid officer, Mr. Williams responded with possibly. Mr. Williams stated that there were people before him that were making the same amount. Mr. Besten stated that with Mr. Williams being gone there is a savings. He then asked how much the health care costs, Ms. Kehoe stated that the cost is roughly \$3,500 for family and \$1,400 a month for individual. The new hire will not need the health insurance. Mr. Williams stated that the new hire might not need it now, but will eventually. Mr. Besten asked how many contracts Mr. Williams went through as a patrolman without complaining about his benefits. Mr. Williams stated that they were here and always taken care of. Mr. Sheils stated that he does not know how relevant this is. Josh Mitchell stated that since this was discussed last time, hey have met with the police union and started with the process of that negotiation. We received their offer, we have them ours, they are meeting again on Friday. Mr. Mitchell stated that he is favorably inclined to add a police officer. The problems with part time officers have become acute enough that we need to take that step. There is an unknown. They should go into executive session to discuss this. Mr. Mitchell believes this should be tabled at this time. We are making a permanent position without all of the facts. The next fiscal year and forward are not known yet. Frank Besten stated that he is more worried about the safety of our police officers. He does not believe there should be more than one police officer on shift. Ms. Carey stated that we would table this. Roni Lopez thought that we would vote on this at this meeting. Mr. Mitchell stated that it was, but there are still unknown factors at this point. He believes we are at an inflection point. What services will be cut to pay for the additional costs. Chris Yarns stated that our part-timers are being courted by other police departments for full-time jobs. The cost for a part timer is around \$9,000 a person. He has been asking around and is

having an issue with staffing. Eric Williams stated that it has always been that way and Chief Yarns disagreed. Josh made the first motion to table the vote, seconded by Steve Guza, the vote was 4-2 with Roni Lopez and Frank Besten voting no. Frank Besten said he understands this but does not agree with it. He does not want to push this down the road. Josh Mitchell stated that the cost is going to go up. For anyone who thinks the borough should eat those costs for what it is, please come up with ideas from where we can cut. That will be the next conversation needed as we go into the next budget. There are questions about the DPW staff, we provide services, like leaf pickup, that has overtime, what do we cut.

**2. VOTE ON NEW POLICE OFFICER**

**3. RECESS**

Bob Sheils made the first motion to adjourn the May 1, 2024 meeting, seconded by Steve Guza.

**BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING  
MAY 29, 2024  
7:00 PM**

The May 2024 Special Borough Council Meeting was conducted on Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at 7:25 P.M. The meeting was held in Borough Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, Junior Council people Mr. McVety and Ms. Siddiqui. Ms. Kathleen Simrell was absent.

**1. WORKSESSION:**

**President Carey**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**President Carey**

Artie Frank, 410 Carnation, stood before Council concerned with the rain garden/retention pond on Carnation Drive. He was and is against this. There was a groundbreaking with Senators and other officials. The pictures showed beautiful pictures of flowers and information concerning the plants. Nothing happened with this. Is there a committee or an arborist who takes care of this. Josh Arp is the arborist who has taken charge of the rain garden. Mr. Franks stated that the area has weeds. The main function to filter the water and it does not work. A drainpipe was installed after flooding. Holes were drilled in the pipe. There are still issues. After the rain, the area floods and drains over the bank to the train tracks. There is a steady flow every day and it goes over the bank. He is concerned about mosquitos and ticks. Gerrie Carey stated that the borough office will look into this. Bob Shiels stated that the council members can visit the area anytime and discuss this another time.

Eric Williams made a comment concerning the comment Frank Besten make about the money Mr. William's made while he was working. Mr. Williams said that he did make good money at the borough and commented that he worked nights, weekends and holidays and didn't know if Mr. Besten ever did that for 20 or 30 years. Artie Frank stated he thought that Mr. Williams earned the money.

**3. DISCUSSION:**

**President Carey**

- Opening of Paving bids: Jenn Basalyga opened the paving bids and read the information for Council. The bids will go to our Borough Engineer for their review. We will have more information for the next meeting.
- CDBG Monies: Ms. Kehoe stated that the county is waiting for council's thoughts on how to spend this year's money. Josh Mitchell asked about the work that was previously discussed for the Senior Center. At this point there

is no specific proposal, do we need a specific plan for what portion of the project the borough would be able to help with. Virginia Kehoe stated that she will check with Peggy Picotti from the county. Mr. Mitchell stated that there is a meeting tomorrow with the AAJRB and there he can get some clarity. Council can vote next meeting if possible. Bob Sheils suggested running this by the county, so we know what to submit. The county does want specifics.

- Resolution 2024-05 Pave Cut Fees: Josh Mitchell stated that the point of this is to make sure the borough is made whole as we change the fees. Ms. Kehoe did ask IDWA for the numbers and she will look into pave cut fees from other municipalities concerning pave cuts. The penalties for someone who is non-compliant need to be established. Ms. Kehoe would update the committee with the numbers.
- Resolution 2024-06 Meter Suspension: Ms. Kehoe stated that this is normal operating procedure. This can be voted on next week.
- Marc Altier resignation: Ms. Kehoe stated that June 30<sup>th</sup> is the earliest but he is hoping if there was a need we can keep him on in July. Will he be replaced? The Personnel Committee will need to address this. Josh Mitchell stated that as things play out it is unfortunate that we will lose an experienced employee but it also means we don't have to let anyone go if we have to make cuts. We need to consider if that is something we need to take advantage of. Gerrie Carey stated that Doug Craig will be retiring also.
- ABPA Summer Solstice special event application: Application is in. We have to vote to officially allow it.. Standard operating procedure. This vote is to close the street.

Bob Sheils asked about putting the Zoom meeting subject on the next agenda. Council went into executive session

**4. REVIEW JUNE 5, 2024 AGENDA**

**5. ADJOURN:**

**President Carey**