

**BOROUGH OF CLARKS SUMMIT
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 10, 2024**

The July 2024 Borough Meeting was conducted on Wednesday, July 10, 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, Ms. Kathleen Simrell, Mayor Harry Kelly, Police Chief Chris Yarns, Solicitor Andrew Krowiak and Borough Manager Ms. Virginia Kehoe. Junior Councilperson Mr. McVety was absent.

MEDITATION:

President Carey

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

President Carey

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

President Carey

Steve Guza made the first motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Roni Lopez, vote was 7-0.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

President Carey

2/28/24 **Work Session**
3/6/24 **Council Meeting**
3/27/24 **Work Session**
4/3/24 **Council Meeting**
4/24/24 **Work Session**

Steve Guza made the first motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Roni Lopez, vote was 7-0.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT & INPUT:

President Carey

4. POLICE REPORT:

Mayor Kelly

- **Letter re: HB 2341:** Bob Sheils made the first motion to approve a letter to be signed by Gerrie Carey and sent to Senator Flynn and Representative Koserowski, seconded by Steve Guza, vote was 7-0. Chief Yarns stated that they are still doing DUI and aggressive driving controls. He stated that the borough pays for the lights on the light poles. There are 6 that do not work. Ms. Kehoe stated that PP&L has been notified they are not working. Solicitor Krowiak will look into this and reach out. Chris Yarns received an award from the Rotary Club. He also thanked everyone for their support during a devastating time. Josh Mitchell stated that the overtime hours were very high. Chief Yarns was off and other officers had trainings that they have to go to.

5. BIDS & QUOTATIONS:

President Carey

6. BOROUGH TREASURER'S REPORT:

President Carey

Reconciled April 2024

Reconciled May 2024

Reconciled June 2024

Roni Lopez made the first motion to approve the borough treasurer's report, seconded by Kathleen Simrell, vote was 7-0.

7. VENDOR PAYMENTS TO BE RATIFIED:

President Carey

JUNE: Josh Mitchell made the first motion to pay the bills, seconded by Roni Lopez, vote was 7-0.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

President Carey

Sewer Report – JUNE Delinquent mailing: Jenn Basalyga stated that 203 letters were sent out. It is normally around 150. Payments are already coming in. Residents will be getting the delinquent letter then they will receive the bill.

Trash report – JUNE Delinquent mailing: Ms. Kehoe stated that late fees have been assessed and she sent two different letters. 152 letters for 2 quarters behind. 161 went to residents who did not pay for the three quarters. We budgeted on a 95% collection rate.

Resolution 2024-5: Pave Cut fees: Bob Sheils made the first motion to approve Resolution 2024-05, seconded by Steve Guza, vote was 5-0, Frank Besten left the meeting and Roni Lopez was unavailable.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

President Carey

- **Doug Craig – retirement:** Frank Besten made the first motion to accept the resignation of Doug Craig, seconded by Steve Guza, vote was 7-0.
- **Justin Mabie – resignation:** Frank Besten made the first motion to accept the resignation of Justin Mabie, seconded by Steve Guza, vote was 7-0.
- **Replacement for DPW:** Ms. Kehoe stated that the borough advertised for DPW workers, we have 2 qualified applicants. Ms. Kehoe asked for council to make a vote before the August meeting because we are down to 2 men. There is very little they can do with 2 or 3 men. Jay Miller, CS BPW Foreman stated that they normally have 6 full time DPW workers. The six are needed for plowing, for the safety of the residents. The leaf pickup is very important and everyone in town likes that service. Also patching the roads takes a full crew. Mr. Miller stated that all of these jobs throughout the year need those members of the DPW. Then there are other jobs where they can break off with less people. Ms. Kehoe mentioned crack sealing and asked Mr. Miller what they need to do that. Mr. Miller stated that they use a 2 station unit, where five people have a job with that. Ms. Kehoe asked if she calls with a situation where a resident is having a sewer backup, what happens then. Mr. Miller stated that the crack sealing job would

have to get shut down so they can send 2 members to open the manhole to make sure there is not a backup in the main. Frank Besten asked Mr. Miller how many people they have to have on a crew for leaf pickup. Mr. Miller said 5 but ideally 6 would be the amount needed. There are 2 leaf trucks The 6th person would be for safety to ride behind them for lighting and safety with traffic. The 6th person would also be there to provide someone with a break. Mr. Besten asked how long it takes for the DPW to go around and pick up the leaves. Mr. Miller stated it would take from one week to 8 or 10 days a month. Ms. Kehoe asked about after Thanksgiving with the snow and ice. Mr. Miller stated that after Thanksgiving they prepare for snow and ice. If the leaves are rained on or it snows, there is the problem of leaves getting plowed back into peoples' yards, frozen to the road which is hazardous to drivers, or the storm basins will clog. Ms. Kehoe stated that we do not pay our men to be on call, if there is a holiday coming up and there is a chance of snow; our men do not drink any alcohol on their own initiative. They know how important it is and they do take pride so everyone is available. Harry Kelly stated that the DPW does an excellent job with snowplowing in the area. Bob Sheils asked how long Mr. Miller has been on the DPW. Mr. Miller stated that he began working in 1986 and he went full time in 1990. Mr. Sheils asked if the borough has utilized part time workers, Mr. Miller said yes. He asked how long we have been doing leaf pickup. Mr. Miller said before he even began in the 80's. Mr. Sheils asked how long the DPW has had 6 full timers. The answer was over 20 years. Mr. Sheils asked how many part timers we have had. Mr. Miller said only 2 part timers as a rule. Bob Sheils asked about the experience needed. Mr. Miller said plowing and backhoe loading experience would be great, and a CDL is needed. Bob Sheils asked if he thinks there are a lot of people they can get to do this job. Mr. Miller said no; Ms. Kehoe has two applicants. He does not think the job pool is that deep for this. Mr. Miller stated that a laborer is paid \$11 an hour. Mr. Sheils discussed a salary for a CDL DPW worker would be around \$40,000 closer to \$50,000. Mr. Sheils stated that the budget committee met this morning and it looks like they are in about a \$600,000 deficit. He asked Jay Miller if he has any idea where the borough can save money through the DPW. Mr. Miller suggested a part timer for some of the work with leaf pickup or snow removal. Bob Sheils stated that J.P. Mascaro will take leaves if they are bagged, or the residents could hire a private person do to that. He asked, if we didn't do the leaves would we need a full time person. Mr. Miller said yes because of the snow removal. Mr. Sheils asked about hiring contractors for snow removal. Mr. Miller stated that we did some contracting when COVID hit but the contractors had other obligations and they came to the borough last. Ms. Kehoe stated that regarding leaf pickup, we can change how we do it, but the leaves have to be recycled, we are a mandated community. We cannot have J. P. Mascaro take them, unless they are taking them to a recycling center. There will be an extra fee for that. Mr. Besten stated that there would not be enough bags for the area. The leaves pileup quite high. Mr. Miller stated that they pick up about 150 truckloads a year and about 3 tons loads. Mr. Sheils stated that he appreciates the work they do but they do have this budget and \$600,000 and this has to be balanced. If not it will end up with slash and burn. Josh Mitchell stated that he

does think they need to have some flexibility as they balance the budget. Mr. Mitchell stated that there are good, better, and best scenarios for everything. A lot of what we do is the best. With 5 people, would the service be considered good instead of great? Could we outsource. Ms. Kehoe stated that if they cut manpower, they will have to contract out. Mr. Mitchell is curious how other communities handle these situations. He thinks that he is not in favor of staffing up to 6 because they need that flexibility. Ms. Kehoe stated that she talked with Mr. Miller and they think they can pull it off with 5 people maybe with seasonal help. We cannot go less than 5 without changing services. Kathleen Simrell is concerned about snow removal and possible safety issues. Ms. Kehoe stated that she is also concerned about the storm water issue with leaf removal, which is a big focus from the state. Steve Guza thanked Mr. Miller for his service and dealing with the public and handling their concerns. Mr. Guza stated that he understands the issues but they have to consider the taxpayers. Ms. Kehoe also stated that if they are going to change services they should have a town hall would be a great benefit to the borough. Educating the public before changes will prevent an uproar. Gerrie Carey stated that years ago, there was a meeting about leaf pickup and the residents did not want any changes. Josh Mitchell asked if we have 5 full time workers and a seasonal worker, will we have to change any services. The answer was no. Steve Guza asked about having a contractor on call to assist the borough. Ms. Kehoe stated there would be a fee associated with that, because there is no guarantee on what income they would get. Ms. Kehoe asked for council to approve the hiring of 2 full time men to bring the count up to 5 for the DPW. Roni Lopez made the first motion to hire 2 full time employees, bringing the total count to 5 full time employees at the DPW. Bob Sheils suggested that they hire one person at that time. He wanted to get a bigger pool of applicants of people who may be able to work part time and help out. If that cannot happen then they can consider coming back and hiring the second person. Mr. Sheils stated that the budget has a \$600,000 deficit and 2 people will be in excess of \$100,000. Frank Besten seconded the motion. On the question Josh Mitchell asked if it is the recommendation of the personnel committee that these two particular applicants be hired. Roni Lopez said yes, she was on the personnel committee. Gerrie Carey stated that Jon Lewis and Ricky Berger recommended these two, as did Virginia Kehoe and Jay Miller. They also have their CDL. Bob Sheils asked if a background check has been done. He has not met with them. Gerrie Carey stated that she is going on the recommendations. Mr. Miller stated that one of the applicants was interviewed last time and was in consideration. The vote was 6-1 with Josh Mitchell pointing out that 5 is the limit for him. Bob Sheils voted no.

10. SOLICITORS REPORT

11. CORRESPONDENCE:

- **Josh Arp:** Mr. Arp gave a proposal to put an island in front of the Gathering Place. Council asked how this would not work with current traffic. We can look into other roads and grants.

Kathleen Simrell mentioned the storm drain at the corner of State Street and Grove Street. Ms. Kehoe stated that she would reach out to PennDOT.

Mr. Sheils inquired about the tree on Highland. Ms., Kehoe stated that she wrote a letter and will go by on July 18th. If it is there we would file with the magistrate and QOL possibly.

Mr. Sheils asked about the resolution for Eric Williams. He wanted to follow through on that. It would be from council. Mr. Mitchell said we should be consistent. If an employee is here over 20 years, they should be set a policy, you get a resolution. It shows appreciation. Roni Lopez and Kathleen Simrell stated that the resolution should be mailed or given at the work session. Mr. Sheils said, whatever works for them, the meeting or the work session.

Josh Mitchell stated that he saw one email with a resident who is not pleased that the meetings are not streamed live. But there is no one present at the meeting that night. There has not been any other correspondence.

Ms. Kehoe wants to sell two trucks that are out of service in the DPW. We are hoping to get about \$15,000 for one and \$30,000-\$40,000 for the other. She recommends putting it on Municibid. Deadline for August meeting. They have to come here to pick up the equipment very soon after the sale. Council has to approve the price.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS:

President Carey

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

ADJOURN:

President Carey

Roni made the motion to adjourn.