

BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
October 29, 2025
7:00 PM

The October 2025 Borough Meeting was conducted on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, 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. Gene Hallinan, Ms. Kathleen Simrell, Mr. Joshua Mitchell, Mr. Robert Sheils, Ms. Roni Lopez, Mr. Steve Guza, Solicitor Andrew Krowiak, Mayor Harry Kelly, Borough Manager Ms. Jenn Basalyga and Jr. Councilperson James Mitchell. Jr. Councilperson Lauren Bartell was absent.

1. WORKSESSION: President Carey

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: President Carey

3. DISCUSSION: President Carey

- Police Car Value \$7,000– Fire Department Interest: Gerrie Carey stated she would like to see the police car go to our fire department. Bob Sheils stated he spoke with Solicitor Krowiak concerning the sale of personal property. There is an exception in the borough code for the volunteer fire companies, so they can do anything they want with that car. Council can give it or sell it to the fire company with no requirement to bid. Gene Hallinan commented that the borough received the police car through a grant, he doesn't see why they can't just give it to them.
- Fire Company President Wesolowski: President Ed Wesolowski provided a copy of the Fire/EMS proposal for three years. Since we don't know what is going to happen with the assessment, they propose to keep the borough contribution at the 2025 rate for 2026, keeping it at 1.5 mills. He suggested later in 2026, they can revisit the contract after the mills are updated, then discuss 2027 and 2028. The fire company is at 2.25 mills which accounts for Workers Comp, fuel, fire hydrants, other contracted services. Josh Mitchell asked if it would make more sense to have a one-year contract then renew it next year with the mills updated. Mr. Wesolowski stated there is language in the agreement that allows each party to come back to each other to discuss continuing financial arrangements. Solicitor Krowiak stated there would be an addendum in the contract that will specify amending the contract pursuant to the millage change. Or council can also just make a one-year agreement. Josh Mitchell suggested looking at 3.A in the agreement saying the millage is subject to change.
- Gregg Kozar- AAJRB parks budget request for 2026: Gregg Kozar is the borough's appointed representative. Josh Mitchell stated council

just received the letter from the AAJRB, he asked Mr. Kozar to elaborate. Mr. Kozar stated the board members with the park approached Lackawanna County asking for support, which resulted in a \$40,000 a year was apparently agreed upon. He stated that for 2026 there will be no increase asked of the borough. One of the caveats is they will be asking for a yearly 3% increase moving forward. Josh Mitchell stated the last increase was 5% last year. Mr. Kozar mentioned their holiday reception on November 9th if anyone was interested.

- Budgets: Josh Mitchell stated the Finance Committee, Gerrie, Bob and Jenn met a few times to get the draft which was in the packet. The quality of the data is in a really good spot, with a thank you to Jenn and Kevin Baumes to get us to this point. He stated we do have work to do to balance the budget. Jenn Basalyga stated we have a deficit in the General Fund of \$71,177, a deficit in the Sewerage Fund of \$75,714 and the Fire Fund of just under \$35,000. Bob Sheils stated the Capital Reserve fund is currently \$310,000 and, in the budget, we will be pulling out \$230,000. Mr. Sheils inquired about the remaining ARPA funds. Ms. Basalyga explained the project deadline ended December 31, 2024. Josh Mitchell stated the main options council has available are to cut some expenses or to raise some revenues. The most obvious spot if council wants to cut expenses is with paving. As of now, \$500,000 is allocated for paving, if that is trimmed to \$350,000 that would allow council to balance the budgets. Jenn Basalyga stated the borough would need to finish the stormwater/sewer and paving on Clark Avenue. The other option is to raise revenue. Mr. Mitchell stated the Finance Committee wanted to ask council for opinions on which option is most preferred. At the next council meeting, they need to vote to publish and advertise three balanced budgets. Jenn Basalyga provided options to council members to raise revenue in for the budget. One option was to raise the sewer fee. That was raised in 2025 \$2. It has been 9 years since the sewer fee was raised. Every dollar the sewer is raised would provide around \$30,000. The trash fee is \$48 a quarter, for every dollar would provide around \$8,000. Bob Sheils also mentioned the borough millage is at 29.5% and it could be raised to 30 mills that would provide \$20,000. Also, there is a deficit in the fire fund due to the increase in the workers' compensation insurance. With the fire fund we could raise taxes to 3 mills. Jenn Basalyga stated the only possibility of a windfall would be with the sewer fund as the new apartment building will need to put in 25 new laterals. Each lateral would provide \$900 to the sewer fund. Bob Sheils asked how many roads would be working on if we kept it the way it is. Ms. Basalyga said Highland Avenue and Clark Avenue. Powell Avenue does need to be addressed also. Mr. Sheils did say paving has become much more expensive. If council decides to reduce the paving amount to \$350,000, Clark Avenue would be a priority. This is an annual challenge; costs are going up. The borough's healthcare is going up and we don't have control of that. We did have a significant increase in our workers' compensation which resulted in a \$30,000 deficit in the general fund and \$20,000 in the fire fund. That was a big change in

2025. Steve Guza asked what the overtime is for leaf pickup. Mr. Mitchell stated the overtime in our DPW budget was 32,000 in 2025 and we budgeted that to go down in 2026. That is leaf pickup and plowing, that accounts for the DPW overtime. Gerrie Carey stated there was a town meeting a few years ago, residents voiced their preference to keep the services provided by the borough along with keeping the garbage bill in their taxes. There is an increase by contract with the garbage contract. The sewer authority is also increasing our contract with them by 11%. Gene Hallinan suggested reducing the paving to cover only Clark Avenue. Kathleen Simrell and Roni Lopez also stated they are comfortable with reducing the paving. Mr. Mitchell did say he hates to see the borough continue to defer maintenance to the roads because we do have roads that are getting behind. But it is an option to balance the budget this year. Josh Mitchell stated if anyone wanted to see the budget with the paving the same but the fees increased, we can draft a budget showing that. Two different budgets can be discussed. Mr. Sheils suggested looking through the budget with a fine-toothed comb to find any extra money. Roni Lopez asked specifically what. Mr. Mitchell did point out there is the \$1,000 saved as the AAJRB will not need the increase. The total amount is \$145,000. Everyone should take this budget home and look into this. Anyone with any suggestions are encouraged to speak up. Mr. Sheils stated the fire budget is very important, there may be other items in the budget that could be cut. Steve Guza suggested going to the unions and see if we can do anything about healthcare and overtime. That would not be possible. Bob Sheils said under the police contract, we have no control on the costs of the overtime. Foundational changes will not be made until the CVA's are up for negotiations again.

Josh Mitchell asked if Ms. Basalyga heard anything from Joe Rovinsky and the county. She will email that to Mr. Mitchell. The next thing would be a resolution permitting the county to bid on that approved project.

Bob Sheils mentioned Joe Russo with Congressman Bresnahan's Office. He would like to attend our next council meeting to discuss funding.

OLP SRO will be sent out to council members. Revisions will be discussed, and council will be able to vote at the next meeting. Bob Sheils stated they are looking for a part time police officer and the borough will be reimbursed, and the part timer is as available.

4. REVIEW NOVEMBER 5, 2025 AGENDA

5. ADJOURN:

President Carey