

BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
February 25, 2026
7:00 PM

The February 2026 Borough Meeting was on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 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, Mr. Joshua Mitchell, Mr. Bob Sheils, Ms. Kathleen Simrell, Ms. Susan Grady, Borough Manager Jenn Basalyga, Solicitor Andrew Krowiak, Mayor Harry Kelly, and Junior Council people Mr. James Mitchell and Ms. Lauren Bartell. Mr. Steve Guza was absent.

1. WORKSESSION:

President Carey

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

President Carey

Chris Loftus, the President of the Rotary Club, lives on Knapp Road. 2 years ago, a rotary member was questioned about the clock tower. They contacted the borough to discuss options. He commented there is a great deal of misinformation about the clock. The clock was erected in 1985 to beautify the area. The owners of the building were Dr. Lee and Dr. Udomsak. They donated the property where the clock tower etc. are. 3 years later Mr. Decker purchased the property. The 911 memorial plaque was placed 17 years after the clock was put in. No intention of getting rid of the plaque. Remove and preserve it until a new location. The Rotary Club has discussed replacing, not repairing, the clock. There would be fundraising, they will not do this on their own. Bob Sheils clarified the property was not donated, there was an agreement in the recorder of deeds saying it was granted a license. It is still Mr. Decker's property. The landowner may revoke the license at any time giving a 90 day notice for the borough to remove the clock tower and restore the premises to prior conditions. Mr. Loftus stated the Rotary Club is happy to help in the process with others donating to the clock. Mike Parry, he is a lifelong resident of the community. He talked about his close relationship with Laura Lee DeFazio. He was at the meeting as a representative of the DeFazio family. Mr. Parry suggested, if the 911 plaque is removed it should go on the front of the borough building. He has spoken with Mr. Decker trying to find a solution. The agreement from 1984 has the 90 clause. He believes the borough has fallen short of maintaining the clock. Mr. Decker proposed a few ideas to Mr. Parry including changes to sewer bill or paying him for the easement. Continued to discuss other options. Bob Sheils stated the memorial will be treated with the utmost respect. Josh Mitchell stated that council authorized the borough solicitor to approach Mr. Decker many months ago and discuss compensating him for an easement. That didn't go anywhere at that time, but circumstances change and that's where we are. Mr. Michell stated he thinks we need a more direct line of communication at this point where Solicitor Krowiak can reach out and see if there is a proposal the borough might consider. Solicitor Krowiak stated the conversations he has had with Mr. Decker are vastly different from the conversations Mr. Parry has had with him.

3. DISCUSSION:

President Carey

- **Clock Tower Correspondence**
- **Ordinance 2026-01 COLA Police Pension:** Solicitor Krowiak stated the Police Pension Board voted 3-1 on this; Council is bound by that vote. Mr. Sheils asked what that means, asking about the borough's fiduciary responsibility as council people to vote the way they think is best? Solicitor Krowiak stated he can vote that, but if he votes against it there may be litigation that would stem from that. Gene Hallinan agreed the pension board would go with an arbitrator if they go that route. Solicitor Krowiak stated the board has the power to administer the fund and creates a fiduciary duty and the board members, the police pension, that's where the fiduciary lies. Solicitor Krowiak stated if council votes against this, there could be potential litigation. Bob Sheils stated we appoint 2 representatives to the Pension Board, and the police have 2 representatives. He would expect the police officers on the board discuss this with the other officers. If this was a decision made that affects financial stability for years to come, was there any discussion with the finance committee. Gerrie Carey stated that administrator of the pension fund felt like this has been a long time coming and the fund itself is in a very good position. Mr. Sheils stated that all the risk and the responsibility for paying is on the borough. The MMO fluctuates and by giving a COLA that means the borough may pay more for it. Josh Mitchell wanted to confirm that this is part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Solicitor Krowiak agreed. If council does not follow the recommendations of the pension board, the police union could say the borough has not followed the terms of the CBA, and they could sue the borough for that.
- **Ordinance 2026-02 457 Deferred Comp:** This can be voted on next week.
- **OLP SRO MOU:** Solicitor Krowiak stated OLP is still working on getting the funding for that position they are in that process.
- **West Grove Street Sidewalks MOU:** Solicitor Krowiak wanted council to review this before sending it over to AHSD to see if there were any additions or corrections.
- **Recycling Pricing Update:** Jenn Basalyga stated she spoke with Buranich Excavating and their pricing is substantially lower. Their fees may be revised. Mr. Mitchell asked if we would need to enter into a contract with them.
- **Civil Service Test:** Jenn Basalyga stated she has not received any applications at this point. We advertised on the Community Page, our website, the newspaper, Lackawanna College also advertised for us.
- **Open Container Ordinance discussion:** Solicitor Krowiak drafted an ordinance for council's review. Josh Mitchell asked if there was an impetus for this. Jenn Basalyga said yes, someone attended a meeting with an open bottle of beer. Other than that, we have not had any issues. Solicitor Krowiak stated there are exceptions for events.
- **Clarks Summit Borough Facebook page:** Jenn Basalyga announced she put a Facebook Page online.

- **Hiring Part Time Police Officer:** The personnel committee interviewed a new part time police officer; the chief is also in support of hiring this person. She speaks Spanish which is a plus.

Bob Sheils mentioned he spoke with Mike Fenick about the watershed resource project around Miles Auto. It would cost around \$300,000 and we are seeking a deed from DCED. Jenn Basalyga stated we need signed easements ready for the application. We are actively working on sending these letters to the residents whose properties will be affected.

- **Police Regionalization:** Josh Mitchell stated that he, Gene, Mayor Kelly and members of South Abington Twp. Mr. Mitchell suggested having Solicitor Krowiak draft a letter to South Abington requesting they participate in an examination of this topic again with us. This will be on the agenda next week. Mr. Mitchell also stated the finance committee met a couple weeks ago, they discussed how the borough was going to replace the chief, part timers, the OIC and the financial implications of all of it. This may be an ideal time to review the other options available.

4. REVIEW March 4, 2026 AGENDA

- 5. ADJOURN:** **President Carey**
Gene Hallinan made the first motion to adjourn, seconded by Kathleen Simrell, vote was unanimous.