

**CLARKS GREEN BOROUGH
COUNCIL MINUTES
NOVEMBER 20, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER: President Egan called the meeting of the Clarks Green Council to order at 7:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Secretary Culbertson conducted roll call. The following were present: Mr. Nealon, Ms. Igoe, Ms. Lucas, Mr. Egan, Mayor Barrasse and Mayor Barrasse. Solicitor Weinschenk via phone.

ABSENT: Ms. DeFlice and Ms. Trushina.

VISITORS: CSPD Chief Yarns, Mary Moore, 113 Glenburn Road, Arthur Jordan, 123 Belmont Ave., John Brennan, 242 E. Grove St. and John Earley, 115 N. Abington Road.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: President Egan entertained a motion to accept the October 16, 2024 minutes. Ms. Igoe motioned, seconded by Ms. Lucas. All voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Arthur Jordan, 23 Belmont Ave., addressed Council concerning his custom shed and the Borough's zoning ordinance. Mr. Jordan stated he submitted a permit and it had been denied back in July noting he had to obtain a variance for the shed through a Zoning Hearing Board meeting but had cancelled it. Mr. Jordan told Council he was here tonight to request some help, direction and some grace in getting this resolved. Mr. Egan asked Solicitor Weinschenk to give some guidance to Mr. Jordan. Solicitor Weinschenk stated he was denied the permit because the proposed placement of the shed did not meet the setback requirements and you will need to obtain a variance which can be costly due to transcript requirements and the meeting will need to be advertised. Solicitor Weinschenk also mention there can be a possibility that someone from the public such as a neighbor might oppose the proposed variance. John Brennan, 242 E. Grove St., informed Council that the crosswalk located at E. Grove St. needs to be painted and the telephone poles in the Borough are in bad shape particularly on Grove St. Mr. Brennan complained about the speeding in the Borough noting it is getting terrible. CSPD Chief Yarns briefly discussed the various speed limits within the Borough and what they are doing in regard to stop speeding within the Borough.

POLICE REPORT: CSPD Chief Yarns briefly reviewed the monthly police report. Chief Yarns stated they are still doing aggressive driving enforcement with the recent grant money the department had received. Chief Yarns talked more about speeding in the Borough and their preventive measures.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Barrasse briefly discussed the backup of traffic heading south from N. Abington Road noting sometimes it is as far as Highland Avenue. Mayor Barrasse asked if the Northeast Signal ever submitted a report noting he had placed an earlier call concerning the light sensor. Ms. Culbertson stated she has not seen a report. Mayor Barrasse questioned whether the portable generator had been tested with the traffic light if the power ever went out. Ms. Culbertson stated she believes it had but will double check with the DPW.

SOLICITOR REPORT: Solicitor Weinschenk reported he had submitted Social Media Policy for Council's review. Several Council members stated they did not receive it. Mr. Egan stated he might have not circulated it but will tomorrow and will discuss at the December meeting.

BOROUGH MANAGER REPORT: Ms. Culbertson reported she and the Zoning Officer, George Parker had attended the Lackawanna County 2025 Hazard Mitigation meeting October 31st updating the current Hazard Mitigation Plan and submitted the revised Plan to the Vision Planning & Consulting group for Lackawanna County. Ms. Culbertson informed Council she attended the November 1st pre-construction meeting for the 2024 Stormwater Project. She informed Council notification letters were hand delivered to residents at Rabbit Run, Evans St. and surrounding streets informing them of the project by the DPW personnel. Ms. Culbertson told Council she had received complaints on the leaf bag pickup noting J.P. Mascaro had become overwhelmed with all the leaf bags within the Borough but promised all bags will be picked up. Ms. Culbertson reported on the Borough's credit card stating the bank closed our current account due to the bank getting a new credit card vendor which created problems with the Quickbook account since we use that card for payroll services. She stated they re-instated the current credit card and in the process of applying for a new card with the same bank. Ms. Culbertson told Council she is also looking at possibly opening up another credit card as a spare with one of the local banks.

Ms. Culbertson informed Council that she is working with Denny McGraw in getting quotes for our electricity usage since our current contract with Direct Energy will be expiring December 31, 2024.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND BILL APPROVAL: Mr. Egan reviewed the distributed Budget vs. Actual comparing balances to last month and last year. The Treasurer's report was presented by Mr. Egan and filed for audit. Current fund balances are as follows:

General Fund Checking	\$	507,203.42
General Fund ICS MM		264,129.51
Capital Fund Money Market		107,499.66
Sewer Fund Checking		351,385.27
Sewer Fund ICS MM		264,140.28
Sewer – FNCB CD #200845158		52,843.08
Sewer – Peoples CD #10003154		79,476.05
Sewer – Wayne Bank CD #80049035		80,447.67
Sewer – Wayne Bank CD #80021603		55,151.05
Sewer – Wayne Bank CD #80044088		53,297.06
State Funds Checking		<u>264,405.92</u>
Total Checking/Savings	\$	2,079,978.97

Mr. Egan entertained a motion to accept the Treasurer's report and ratify the payment of the bills. Ms. Igoe motioned, seconded by Ms. Lucas. All voted in favor.

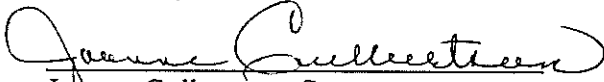
MOTIONS: Mr. Egan entertained a motion to approve the credit application for NBT credit card. Ms. Igoe motioned, seconded by Mr. Nealon. All voted in favor. Mr. Egan entertained a motion to approve the credit application for the current Bank of Louisiana credit card. Ms. Igoe motioned, seconded by Mr. Nealon. All voted in favor. Mr. Egan entertained a motion to approve the 2025 Proposed Budget and to advertise. Mr. Egan stated the proposed budget is a balanced budget with no tax increases. Ms. Lucas motioned, seconded by Ms. Igoe. All voted in favor. Mr. Egan briefly explained that Mayor Barrasse told Council at the previous meeting that he and his wife would like to participate in the employees' health insurance plan that is provided by the Borough. Mayor Barrasse supplied documentation showing that this was allowed based off the Borough Code noting there was statute 8 Pa.C.S. §10A04(b) stating any change in salary, compensation or emoluments of the elected office shall become effective at the beginning of the next term of the mayor. Mr. Egan stated based on this statute I had a discussion with Solicitor Weinschenk. Mr. Egan asked Solicitor Weinschenk to give Council his opinion on this statute. Solicitor Weinschenk told Council the Borough Code states the mayor and /or his/her dependents can be insured under a policy or policies of insurance covering health insurance and are not considered salary or compensation so Council does not have to wait until the next term. Solicitor Weinschenk noted that the Mayor Barrasse will be paying the 100% of the insurance premiums for both him and his wife. Ms. Igoe told Council she is concerned since Mayor Barrasse recently stated he has been dealing with some health issues recently would this increase the health insurance rates for our DPW staff as well as the Borough. Ms. Lucas stated they cannot rate benefits on any health conditions any longer. The only thing they rate is based on age and smoking history. Mr. Egan entertained a motion to authorize Mayor Barrasse and his dependent (wife) to join Clarks Green Borough's Health Insurance plan per the fringe benefits section of 8 Pa.C.S. §1202(26)(ii) and in accordance with the section authorizing such benefits 8 Pa.C.S. §10A04(a.1) agreeing all insurance premium payments and expenses will be paid 100% by Mayor Barrasse by the 1st of every month starting December 1, 2024 ending with term expiration. Ms. Lucas motioned, seconded by Mr. Nealon. All voted in favor. Mayor Barrasse thanked Council.

OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Egan talked about increasing the Mayor and Council's compensation based on new State limits per Act 131 noting this will not take effect immediately. It has no effect on this Council. The maximum allowable compensation for the borough officials had not been updated since 1995. Solicitor Weinschenk told Council this does not take effect until December 30, 2024 and suggested if you are to entertain a motion you can place on the January 2025 agenda. Mr. Egan talked more about the consideration of seeking a referendum to reduce the size of Clarks Green's Council from seven (7) members to five (5) members. Mr. Egan reviewed the process and what will be needed to put it on a ballot for the public to vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mr. Egan called for an executive session to discuss raises and possible bonuses for the Borough employees. The session started at 8:06 P.M. ending at 8:21 P.M.

Mr. Egan entertained a motion to approve a 5% raise increase to Borough employees for 2025 along with bonuses in the following amounts - Culbertson \$1,000, Hiller - \$500, Walsh, \$500 – Worobey - \$500 – Parker \$200 and Thompson - \$200 along with paying \$500 at the end of each quarter in 2025 to Ms. Culbertson for a health insurance buyout explaining she purchased her own health insurance for several years while being employed at Clarks Green Borough. Ms. Lucas motioned, seconded by Ms. Igoe. All voted in favor.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Egan entertained the motion to adjourn the meeting. All of Council agreed 8:23 P.M.


Joanne Culbertson, Secretary

CLARKS GREEN BOROUGH
AGENDA
November 20, 2024
7:00 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – President Egan
2. **ROLL CALL** – Secretary Culbertson
3. **MOTION TO APPROVE COUNCIL MEETINGS MINUTES:** October 16, 2024
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
5. **POLICE REPORT**
6. **MAYOR’S REPORT** – Mayor Barrasse
7. **SOLICITOR REPORT** – Atty. Weinschenk
8. **BOROUGH MANAGER REPORT:** Ms. Culbertson
9. **REVIEW OF BOROUGH FINANCIALS, BUDGET VS. ACTUAL AND MOTION TO PAY BILLS.**
10. **MOTIONS:**
 - Approve credit application for NBT credit card.
 - Approve credit application for current Bank of Louisiana credit card.
 - Motion to approve the 2025 Proposed Budget and to advertise
 - Motion to authorize Mayor Barrasse and his dependent to join Clarks Green Borough’s Health Insurance plan per the fringe benefits section of 8 Pa.C.S. §1202(26)(ii) and in accordance with the section authorizing such benefits 8 Pa.C.S. §10A04(a.1) agreeing all insurance premium payments and expenses will be paid 100% by Mayor Barrasse by the 1st of every month starting December 1, 2024 ending with term expiration.
11. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Consideration of increasing the Mayor and Council Compensation to new State limits. Consideration of seeking a referendum to reduce the size of Clarks Green’s Council from 7 members to 5 members.
12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Legal /personnel issues : Bonuses & raises
13. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

NOTE TO VISITORS: Please sign the attendance sheet and indicate if you wish to observe the meeting or to address Council, stating the agenda topic on which you would like to comment. Speakers are allowed 3 minutes each for comments. Thank you.