

November 24, 2008, Work Session
Minutes

A Work Session of the Clarion Borough Council was held on Monday, November 24, 2008, in the Clarion Borough Offices. The meeting was called to order by President Wilshire 5:10 p.m. Councilmembers present were: Ms. Moore, Mr. Zerfoss, Ms. Vavrek, Mr. Herman, and Ms. Leonard. Mayor Stroup, Chief Hall, Mr. Ragon, and Mss. LaVan and Freenock were also present.

ADMINISTRATION

President Wilshire asked Ms. Freenock to review the proposed 2009 Budget. Ms. Freenock informed Council as to the successful tax appeals that were filed and the resultant loss in tax revenues for 2009. The budget was then reviewed in its entirety. Permission to advertise the budget will be requested at the December Council Meeting. The budget in draft form advises Council as to the maximum tax increase that would be permitted due to the change in the pre-determined ratio by the County. The maximum tax increase permitted would be 5%. However, Ms. Freenock is not recommending a tax increase this year. Referring to the fund balance, and the efforts of both the Public Safety and Public Works Department to control costs, a surplus was recorded for 2007 and one is anticipated at the end of 2008. A tax decrease is not recommended because those surpluses will be applied in 2009 to maintain a positive fund balance.

The proposed Tobacco-Free Ordinance and Policy was then discussed. Mr. Zerfoss indicated that he believes that all Borough property should be tobacco free. The policy has been presented to the Public Safety Department and will be presented to the Public Works Department before permission is requested to advertise the Ordinance. Ms. Freenock was requested to obtain additional information from Solicitor French.

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE

Ms. Moore noted that the holiday brochure prepared for the events of the forthcoming weeks was done in a professional manner and she commended those responsible for preparing the brochure.

PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. Vavrek noted that Mr. John Knight's last day of probation is Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 27, 2008. At the December Council Meeting, she will ask Council to approve employing Mr. Knight on a full-time basis.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Herman noted that permission to advertise an Ordinance amending Chapter 205, Section 39, will be requested at the December Council Meeting. The purpose of the change is to provide for 30-minute meters along Ninth Avenue next to the new dining hall. The meters will be 30 minutes at the request of the University. The University is purchasing the parking meters with the Borough to receive all revenues generated there from.

RECREATION REPORT

Ms. Leonard noted that the Borough was awarded a DCNR Grant for repairs at the Toby Boat Launch. The amount of the award is 50% of the projected cost to make improvements at Toby.

Ms. Leonard indicated that no increase in pool user fees will be sought in 2009.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Freenock noted that the Task Activity Report has been prepared by Gannett Fleming and will be filed before the November 30th deadline. She also indicated that a proposal has been received from Gannett Fleming for the next step in the process outlined in the Consent Order and Agreement. Permission will be requested to engage Gannett Fleming for the next step at the December Council Meeting.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. following a motion by Mr. Zerfoss and a second by Mr. Herman.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy K. Freenock
Borough Secretary