

November 4, 2008, Council Meeting

A regular meeting of the Clarion Borough Council was held on Tuesday, November, 4, 2008, in the Clarion Borough Offices. President Wilshire called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All Councilmembers were present with the exception of Ms. Leonard and Mr. Hopkins. Also present were Chief Hall, Mr. Ragon, Ms. Freenock, Mayor Stroup, and Ms. LaVan.

On a motion by Mr. Herman with a second by Ms. Vavrek the minutes of the October 7, 2008, Council Meeting, were unanimously approved.

On a motion by Ms. Vavrek with a second by Mr. Herman the minutes of the October 22, 2008, Special Council Meeting, were approved by a vote of four yea. Ms. Moore abstained as she was absent from that meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

President Wilshire recognized Dave Walters, president of the Clarion Fire Company. Mr. Walters questioned why the Fire Company had received no millage from the Borough.

Ms. Freenock responded as follows: in June, Council approved a resolution to use up to \$16,000 of the millage to pay for an engineering study of the Fire Hall. There is no dispute that the fire hall is in need of repair. A number of contractors have looked at the building but we have not been able to nail down exactly what has to be done or the cost to complete repairs. The only way to get a comprehensive report is to pay for it; the only available source to pay for this service is the fire millage. Recently, we located an engineering firm that is joint venturing with an architect to look at the building and prepare a written report including costs estimates. The cost to prepare the report is \$2,500. The estimated cost for repairs is between \$300,000-\$400,000. At this point, we do not know if there are any emergent needs at the building. If there are, the fire millage may need to be used to make those repairs.

Use of the fire millage in this manner is a use authorized by the Borough Code. As you may know, the Borough is in the Early Intervention Program. The purpose of that program is to keep the Borough from becoming distressed. We have no capital reserves.

From July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, the Borough paid \$49,291 in operating expenses for the fire company/hall. The money was used to pay for workers comp, heat, electricity, communications and water. We receive \$2,500 toward workers comp from other municipalities served by the fire company. The Borough is in effect subsidizing the other municipalities served by the fire company. Our millage rate is at 26; an adjacent township is at four. I cannot justify these expenditures to Borough taxpayers.

Mr. Walters stated that the fire company should have been made aware of what was happening. He explained the cost involved in training a firefighter. He indicated that running the fire company was like running a business-it is revenue dependent.

Mr. Zerfoss stated that he was not aware the millage was being withheld. He does not believe that hiring consultants is the way to go; in the past, fund drives have been conducted to get

what is needed at the fire company. We have a good fire company. Members come from the Townships, the University and the Borough. The members work together to answer calls, regardless of location. I personally give you support and believe that you are entitled to the fire millage. I agree that others don't do as much as the Borough. You're the best there is, the best there was, and the best that will come.

Ms. Vavrek stated that she and Mr. Walters previously discussed doing a fund drive. Ms. Vavrek stated that a fund drive was not commenced this year, because VNA is conducting a major fund drive. In addition, before a fund drive can begin, we must know how much we need to raise. Without a written report, it would be difficult to justify the amount needed. The study is to look at everything in the building; the roof, HVAC, electrical etc. We want to have the fire company housed in a safe and efficient building. We will have to approach the other municipalities that the fire company serves for help with this project. The fire company does a wonderful job and we appreciate all of the sacrifices that the members make.

Mr. Walters responded that the fire company agrees that the hall is in need of repair. He reiterated that the fire company needs the millages from all of the municipalities. Many clubs in the area have been donating to the fire company and those donations have helped with escalating costs.

Mr. Herman stated that he did not realize that millage was being withheld. He agrees with what was said by Mr. Zerfoss. He also stated that Council is committed to the fire department. In the short term, the fire company needs the Borough's help. In the long term, the Borough will need the fire company's help. It appears that there was a breakdown in communication. We need to communicate a little better.

There was a discussion about the cost for the study and the millage currently in the fire account.

Mr. Zerfoss made a motion to have all of the fire millage paid as soon as possible to the fire company. The motion was seconded by Mr. Herman. A discussion ensued during which Mr. Zerfoss was asked to amend his motion to deduct \$2,500 from the millage to pay for the report. Mr. Zerfoss refused. Ms. Freenock asked if this was an amendment to the motion made in June.

Ms. Moore and Vavrek discussed the need for the study. President Wilshire called for a roll call vote on Mr. Zerfoss' motion: Mr. Zerfoss, yes; Mr. Herman, yes; Ms. Vavrek, no; Ms. Moore, no; President Wilshire, yes. The motion carried.

President Wilshire stated that the amount of money expended by the Borough on an annual basis is a problem. Mr. Zerfoss stated that when we know more about what must be done at the fire hall, the Townships and the University should be consulted and asked to contribute. Mr. Herman stated that the fire company will also need to help.

President Wilshire stated that Council is aware of the number of calls handled by the fire company on an annual basis. Mr. Walters stated that the company has answered 231 calls

from January 1 to date. He also stated that the fire company would be more than happy to work with the Borough on the fire hall.

The fire company left at the conclusion of this discussion.

Mr. Rodney Sherman of the Clarion News commended the Public Works Department on a job well done during ALF.

Mr. Jason Dailey, the Director Public Works for Cranberry Township, presented a power point presentation concerning the on-going Peer-to-Peer review, which is being undertaken on behalf of the Public Works Department. Mr. Dailey explained the purpose of the Peer-to-Peer Review, the process to be undertaken, and what the final product will encompass.

ADMINISTRATION

Upon a motion by Mr. Herman with a second by Ms. Vavrek, the appropriations for the month of November were approved by a vote of four yea with one nay. Mr. Zerfoss voted no due to invoices received from Reed Smith and from Guardian.

On a motion by Ms. Vavrek with a second by Mr. Herman, permission to advertise Ordinance #2008-756, an ordinance for the audit of the accounts of said Borough by an independent auditor appointed by the Borough Council, was unanimously approved.

Permission to solicit proposals for a 2009 TAN in an amount not to exceed \$300,000 was unanimously approved following a motion by Ms. Vavrek with a second by Ms. Moore.

Permission for the Borough to file its reports electronically with PennDOT was unanimously approved upon a motion by Mr. Herman with a second by Ms. Moore.

Resolution #2008-270, concerning the new Open Records Policy, was unanimously approved following a motion by Ms. Vavrek with a second by Mr. Herman.

DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE

Ms. Vavrek reported on the upcoming Christmas holiday celebrations. Ms. Moore informed Council of the dates for carriage rides.

Upon a motion by Ms. Vavrek with a second by Ms. Moore, permission was granted to file a FEMA Grant for a loud speaker system along Main Street.

PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. Vavrek noted that the stamped concrete is almost complete. Mr. Herman commented that payment should be withheld if the project is not complete. Ms. Vavrek made a motion that Council approves payment to M and B Services for work completed. That motion was seconded by Ms. Moore and was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC SAFETY

On a motion by Mr. Herman with a second by Ms. Moore, permission for the Borough to continue to participate in Buckle-Up PA was unanimously granted.

Following a motion by Mr. Herman with a second by Ms. Vavrek, Council unanimously approved the filing of a Community Revitalization Grant for Emerson Way.

A vacancy on the Civil Service Commission was noted.

HOUSING AND ZONING

Mr. Zerfoss indicated that the report is in the packet. Ms. Vavrek noted that the Sign Ordinance and the Burning Ordinance will be under review.

RECREATION

On a motion by Ms. Vavrek with a second by Mr. Herman permission to file for County CDBG funds for a number of improvements to the pool as reported in the pool feasibility study was approved unanimously.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Stroup indicated that on December 5th at Zion Baptist Church a Transportation Funding Meeting will be held to discuss the current status of the tolling of I-80.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Freenock indicated that prior to the meeting she distributed a memorandum outlining the current status of all grants for which the Borough is or has applied for or been granted. She also asked Council to approve the filing of a Smart Transportation Grant Application for the Greenville Avenue sidewalk. Following a motion by Mr. Herman with a second by Ms. Vavrek Council unanimously approved the filing of this Grant.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Zerfoss updated everyone that the problem motorists have exiting Corbett Street onto Greenville Avenue still exists. Instead of a 15 minute wait, it is now up to 21 minutes. This is a priority that needs addressed.

CORRESPONDENCE

Thank you notes from the United Way of Clarion County and the Clarion Area Chamber of Business and Industry were read.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon a motion by Mr. Herman and a second by Ms. Vavrek, the Council Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy K. Freenock
Borough Secretary