

Borough of Clarks Summit
January Work Session
Tuesday, January 6, 2009
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The January Work Session for the Borough of Clarks Summit was conducted on Tuesday, January 6, 2009 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 President Gerrie Carey, Mr. Roy Davis, Mrs. Kathy Drake, Mayor Harry Kelly, Mr. Robert Bennett, Mrs. Barbara Evans, Mr. Jeremy Adelman and Mr. Kevin Yetkowskas. Mr. Herman Johnson arrived at 7:15pm and Council Vice President Patrick Williams arrived at 7:23pm. Also attending were Borough Manager/Secretary, Virginia Kehoe and Solicitor Ernest Preate. There being a quorum present the Meeting was called to order by Council President.

Attendance and Seating: Gerry Carey explained the reason for the seating change is to try to organize the table better. With Virginia being next to the solicitor, it would make it easier to ask questions instead of talking back and forth. Virginia stayed at her location in case she needs access to her office. The mayor and the chief would be on that side. Gerry Carey spoke to Chief Louis Vitale earlier in the day regarding his attendance at the meetings. He suggested speaking to the Mayor. The chief thought it would be more of a benefit to the public to answer any questions. Also, if he wants to leave a little early because there is nothing that pertains to him, he could just go out the door. We thought that worked out well. The rest of the seating is arranged by seniority. Bob Bennett objects, he liked the seating the way it was. Herman Johnson arrived and agreed with the seating arrangements. He feels as though with the economy, there are more important issues to go over. Bob Bennett said that if an issue involves him, he would like to be asked beforehand. He doesn't appreciate his seat being moved. Mr. Bennett did agree with the seating arrangements.

Public Comment: Helene Magnotta from 206 Barberry presented council with a letter regarding the Moody Tower. She wanted to give this letter in advance of tomorrow night's Council Meeting.

Contracted Professionals Policy: Letters were drawn up for the engineer and all the solicitors to keep them within our budget. The finance committee is concerned with the finances. Herman Johnson thought it was a great idea because we are the ones responsible for paying the bills for council. It's a step forward in controlling our spending. Virginia Kehoe asked everyone to review the letter and let her know of any changes are to be made. These letters are to be mailed on Friday.

Trash Contract: Gerry Carey said the bids were read yesterday at 3:00pm. Virginia Kehoe gave everyone a copy of the bids that we received. Joyce Hatala billed us \$1500 and she has saved us a lot more than that. She has been invaluable with that. Ernie Preate was saying yesterday that we really showed that we knew what we were talking about when we set up this bid and it made them sharpen their pencils before they came in. As a result, if we choose to keep the same service that we have right now, it appears that we can probably do that with only a 20% increase which is less than we budgeted for. Even if we go with the same service it looks like we'll have more money in our budget than we anticipated. There are options there for you to consider that might save us more money. The finance committee might want to look options over and make a recommendation as to what they feel would be the best combination here. At this point, Ernie has the bids. He's going to look them over and make sure they meet the legal specifications of the bid. We will vote on that at the February 4th meeting. If we want to make any reductions as a result of the recommendations that result in amending the budget, that would need to be advertised and voted on before January 31st. We would save \$21,000 a year just by alternating recycling pick up. Gerry Carey said another option is commercial pickup. If we did that, we would get their cardboard. Herman Johnson said he would like to commend council and Joyce Hatala for all of their hard work on this. Because he knows it was a lot of hard work. He thinks our community should realize we haven't raised taxes for 2009 and we have a 20% increase in our waste collection which he thinks is commendable. Bob Bennett asked what happened to the limiting of the bags idea. Virginia said this is the "Cadillac" service with only a 20% increase. The finance committee could look at it and see if they want to with the limiting of bags option to save even more. Ray Davis said we pay a lot for trash. He doesn't like paying for other people's trash. He

thinks if people get hit in the pocketbooks, residents will look at other options such as trash compactors. Roy Davis agreed with Ray Davis and says it may be a great opportunity to cut back, that we don't need the Cadillac service. Non residents, whether it is a passer by or a friend or relative, have been known to drop off their trash on trash day. Ultimately, we are paying for that. Just because we can make budget on this, this may be the opportune time to look into cutting back. Herman Johnson agreed with Roy Davis in that the finance committee should look this over and make sure the decision is right for the whole community. Virginia Kehoe said this is a 3 year commitment with 2 year optional years at council's option. Roy Davis brought up the issue of the sewer increase. He believes we should have spent more time on this before making the decision to double the charge for long term improvements. For a lot of taxpayers, some are on fixed incomes, some are only a husband and wife, the increase comes to \$350 a year. He can't see paying for it upfront and now. Gerry Carey said we had looked at paying upon usage. It seems like a more fair way to do it than a flat fee. Virginia Kehoe said we really need a committee to start looking into this. Roy Davis said he would be happy to be on a committee. Ray Davis also commends council, especially after hearing about the other municipalities having a much higher increase on waste removal. As a taxpayer, he thanks you for that. Ernie Preate also commends council on getting bids that were very thorough. He did say that the biggest problem we have is that we're on the edge to try to reduce the price. The basic price of the cost of doing business for a hauler is the payment he has to pay to the landfill, he also has an equipment charge, and a charge to pay employees. The price to the landfill is more than 50% of his cost. 80-90% of bid is the tipping fee, trucks, and personnel. Now, we're reduced to fuel adjustments, recycling adjustments, number of bags and that sort of thing. There is a little amount that you can cut. Ray Davis said if we can get the price down, there are other areas where we can spend the money such as on roads. Virginia Kehoe said that's exactly what the finance committee was talking about. Ernie Preate stated the asphalt should be decent this year as opposed to last year. We should know what the asphalt prices will be in May when the bids are due. Gas will be about \$2 a gallon by then, it's heading back up there now. We're going to have a fairly decent summer. We're going to be able to pave a lot more. We have budgeted \$200,000 for paving. Virginia Kehoe said in 2008 we did a little over \$200,000. We should be able to have more bang for the same buck. The stimulus should kick in for infrastructure. It's going to be pumped directly into the state for roads. That's the one thing they can do to put people to work in the summertime on roads and bridges. From May 1st to November 1st we can do a lot of work paving the streets. Ernie Preate said we should have a press release about Clarks Summit not raising taxes. Herman Johnson suggested putting good news such as this on the website. Barbara Evans suggested having a new setup for the web site.

Zoning Amendments: Virginia stated that the final versions of the three ordinances that we will be voting on are in front of council. The Planning Commission reviewed ordinance 2009-01 and 02. 2009-01 is the Shade Tree ordinance and it's allowing Will to enforce it. 2009-02 is the ordinance that we discussed that would allow us to put a lien against fire insurance payments for damaged properties to ensure that they are restored. Ordinance 2009-05 has already been adopted by South Abington and is on the agenda to be voted on in Clarks Green. This is merely putting the sewer ordinance in line between the three communities so we have the same penalties and enforcement. This is just amending the sewer ordinance to mirror the other communities. We also spoke about the burning ordinance and decided not to make any changes. We also have a nuisance ordinance but the planning commission decided not to sent it up to you guys because they want to work some more on it. Maybe in February you will see it.

Voting: Virginia asked that council find a way to be clear in their voting. We may have 6-1 for example, but we would like to be able to say whoever's name with yea and whoever's name with nay. Herman Johnson agrees with this but states it has to be consistent. Pat Williams thinks that would take a lot of time. Mr. Johnson said if we stay consistent and stick to the agenda, we can get out of these meetings at a decent time.

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Adjournment: A motion was made by Herman Johnson, it was seconded by Barbara Evans and the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori A. Harris
Borough Secretary

Germaine Carey
Council President