

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, 315 WESTFIELD AVE., CLARK NJ**  
**February 16, 2016**

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Council Members Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Also Present: Mayor Sal Bonaccorso; John Laezza, Business Administrator; Richard Huxford, Acting Township Attorney; Edith Merkel, Township Clerk.

The Regular Meeting of the Municipal Council of the Township of Clark was called to order at 7:30 P.M. by Council President Hund. He asked all present to participate in a moment of silence, following the salute to the Flag.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG - MOMENT OF SILENCE**

This meeting is in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 231, P.L.1975) as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by mailing the Annual Schedule of meetings to the Star Ledger, Union County Local Source, and TAP into Clark, by posting such Annual Meeting Schedule on the bulletin board in Town Hall reserved for such announcements and the filing of said Notice with the Township Clerk of Clark. Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

Motion to Suspend the Regular Order of Business made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Mazzarella

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Presentation by Recreation Director, Ralph Bernardo

Ralph Bernardo: As the Director of Recreation and working alone, it can be challenging at times, however so many residents offer their services and volunteered their time to help the rec department over the last ten years that I have run the department. I am so appreciative for all the parents that coach teams, hold classes, help set up for major events and generally help whenever I reach out. There is not much I can do to show how much I appreciate the help, but many towns and organizations recognize these individual volunteers. The Mayor and Council have approved me to recognize and present a "Volunteer of the Year" award to publically acknowledge and thank individuals for going above and beyond.

I'm happy and proud to present our first recipients for this award who are actually a couple: Our first recipients of the Clark Recreations Volunteer of the Year Award is presented to Clark's own Lenny and Dawn Greico. This fine couple have gone above and beyond volunteering and donating their services to the Recreation Department and township.

Lenny and Dawn are the first to jump in and help whenever the Rec Dept. or Township is in need, even if not asked. Over the last ten years here are just a few of the things they have helped with:

- Skate park events – in the fall and spring – posting and delivering flyers – Supplying water – Gatorade – out of their own pocket. Giving up their Saturdays to help with registrations and getting volunteers to be at the skate park.
- The initiation of the “Hooked on fishing” program which started last spring. Lenny went right into action with the purchase of 20 fishing poles - bait – tackle – and equipment. He taught 15 kids how to cast, hook bait, and general fishing tips of all Lenny’s talents for two Saturdays.
- Before the Annual Tree Lighting event Lenny and Dawn come in – scrub and disinfected the entire kitchen. They set up the kitchen for the event, they purchased coffee – hot chocolate – sugar, coffee thermoses and pots. After all this they worked from start to finish cleaning the entire kitchen until the conclusion.
- They worked the Haunted House – decorating the museum lawn with advertising signs, hay bales, pumpkins, corn stalks and the additional purchase of 8 lawn signs – which they drove around town and displayed. Dawn then dressed up and collected tickets the entire night –every year.
- Dawn stops in my office at least 2-3 times a week to see if flyers need to be delivered to all the various private schools in town for every seasonal change or major event
- They will pick up of food - water – cookies – pretzels – donuts for every major event including the Tree Lighting – Haunted House – Easter Egg Hunt – and Summer Camp just to name a few I can go on and on.
- Lenny has serviced our ice machine, stove, bathroom fixtures – again donating his time and supplies
- Working countless hours at the UNICO feast from set up to break down.
- Their generosity goes far beyond with an endless sea of giving – monetarily, time, talents and even including their family members – always with a smile, calm personality and enthusiasm. They are an asset to the rec department and the Township of Clark. Words cannot describe how I feel about this couple.

It is with great pride and pleasure to present the two of you with this plaque:

The plaque reads: Volunteer of the Year Award presented to Lenny and Dawn Greico for your unselfish volunteering of time, talent, and generosity to the Clark Recreation Department in the Township of Clark. On behalf of the Mayor, Council and Township Employees we thank you and are appreciative for all that you have done.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Thank you Ralph. Lenny and Dawn on behalf of myself and the Township Council we would like to also thank you again from the bottom of our hearts for what you do. I think I know you guys probably over thirty years and I know you have also been just wonderful people to know and to work with. You know Ralph does have a difficult job, because his job is basically keeping everybody happy. He wants to always fulfill the needs of everyone in town from you know babies in mama’s arms right to our senior citizens and everyone in between and he does that but he also sometimes needs some help. And folks like you are there for us and that’s what makes this town a great place to be when we have people we know who are friends and neighbors such as the Greico’s that come forward to help out the community. It’s just a wonderful thing, so thank you again from myself and the Township Council and our team, we really, really appreciate it. And Ralph did tell me Lenny and Dawn that he had to tell you a little white lie to get you here tonight. So that’s good, that’s okay, he’s thinking out of the box, we like that also Ralph, you are thinking out of the box.

But anyway now I have also a presentation to make. You know it’s great when you could pick up a paper or publication or online and read something good about our community. And you know being here almost all my life I know what a great community this town has always been and what great people we have here. But we’ve always had one thing that’s kind of been the backbone of this community and that’s our police department. And Chief Matos please join me up here. I think you all know our Chief. There was an article

out that Clark Township was named the 44<sup>th</sup> safest place to live in New Jersey out of 565 municipalities. But more importantly we were #1 in Union County. And I want to present this tonight to the Chief to put in his lobby to let the people know when they come into our police department they are coming into a really, really great police department. And there's one also in the lobby at town hall. These are the type of things that we are very, very proud of. How these statistics are all compiled sometimes, folks I don't know. You know there's the New Jersey Monthly on best places to live and you know to me I think Clark is probably the #1 safest place to live. But 44 out of 565 that's saying something and the thing we are proud of is #1 in Union County. Chief Matos has taken over thirteen months ago and we've had some movement in the department with some younger officers who are out here. And also some new administrative under him, Captains, Lieutenants and Sergeants. So together working with the Chief under his direction we have one heck of a police department I think as we always have had and working hard and getting great recognition for it. So I wanted to celebrate that tonight along with the Greico's here and have some good positive things going on because we do have a great community.

The other thing I would like to say is not only do we have a great police department, I'm going to give them a big pat on the back, but the one group I want to pat on the back is our citizens. We have nice people living here in Clark. Our citizens do not cause crime here in Clark. They are good people, law abiding people and that also helps make a community have the kind of accolades we have here tonight. Because the people here as I like to say are a big clientele. They do a good job, they are respectful of one another, they are respectful of our police department. And I also want to thank the citizens of Clark for achieving this, it's always a team effort. It starts with the citizens and it kind of works its way up when things are good through town hall and our department. And when things are bad it just kind of works its way into the Mayor's office, I get that, I signed up for that. But anyhow I would like to turn it over to the Chief for a little presentation that he has for everyone.

Police Chief Matos: Thanks Mr. Mayor for the kind words and I certainly have to agree that no matter how great of a police department we have we need the people, the citizens to report things to us so that we can do our job. From a service standpoint I thought I would share with you all some of the things that we accomplished this year and some of the things that we do on a daily basis that some of you probably do not know about. So I thought I would share that with you. From the traffic enforcement kind of standpoint Clark is a very traffic heavy town during the day and we all know it's congested. The police department conducted 5800 traffic motor vehicle stops for traffic infractions in 2015, that was up 33% from 2014. From a directed enforcement standpoint from where our known trouble areas are we were up 25% from 15 to 2014. So those areas where we know there's speeding takes place on a regular basis, we are getting out there to try to prevent a tragedy from occurring. We also responded to 916 other traffic related complaints from citizens.

In October 29<sup>th</sup> of last year we were also recognized by Northeast AAA for our dedication to traffic safety and for having zero traffic related fatalities in 2014. I'm also happy to announce we had zero traffic fatalities in 2015. One statistic that I'm very proud of also is our incidents of pedestrians being struck by motor vehicles went down 50% from 2014 to 2015. I like to think that our traffic enforcing plays a part of that in having people to slow down. We went from ten pedestrians struck in 2014 to just 4 in 2015. From a service standpoint the department responded to a 1016 emergency medical calls last year and an additional fifty-five emotionally disturbed persons calls which are always a very delicate situation and could be a dangerous situation. We also responded to 1167 requests from citizens for assistance. These are calls that don't really fall into a criminal category, there was no report of a crime, these are just basic assistance like people locked out of their homes, an elderly person who might have fallen and needed help getting up. And we even responded to calls from caretakers who are taking care of let's say a terminal ill patient at home

and they can't move that person and they need help we come and help. We also performed 3500 checks or parking walks, officers get out and check our business areas, check our parks and our municipal buildings, 3500, that's a great statistic. Our officers are getting out there and trying to be visible in the community and checking what's going on. We responded to just a little bit over a thousand burglar alarms. I'm sure most of them are a nuisance, I wish that we didn't have that many but it's something that officers do every day and we respond to every single one as if it's an actual emergency. We also responded to 314 fire related emergencies, 303 animal complaints, these include animal bites, lost pets, found pets, or a pet that might have gotten struck by a car. We had a 212 theft related reports and 158 property crime and damage related reports. One thing we did notice was, and I expected this, there was a small spike in the vehicle burglaries from June to about October. That put us higher than the previous year, but we addressed it and we got a lot of help from the community out on Westover Road that's on the east side of town that was getting hit. They even formed a neighborhood watch. We made three arrests for some of the burglaries and it seemed to have sufficed for now. We processed 434 arrests last year in Clark, that was fifty percent more than in 2014. And I attribute that statistic to we have a very, very young police department now and as young officers are they are more ambitious, they are out there and have more tools. We have more automated license plate readers and they are getting out there and being proactive.

The department also conducted or provided nearly twenty-seven hours of in-service training to all of our personnel. And that's up 43% from 2014. We responded to 212 complaints regarding juveniles and our youth aid bureau provided over seventy Dare educational sessions in our schools. Our detective bureau was assigned 221 cases and closed out 32% with an arrest. They also processed an additional 350 fire arms related applications and background checks for licensing and employment. The department worked very hard this year to combat the amount of retirements that we've had over the last couple of years. We were able to hire nine new officers, three new 911 Dispatchers, and six new Special Officers. We also completed which was a year in a half long process of updating all our policies and procedures, our rules and regulations and distributed them all out electronically to our personnel. We updated and overhauled all of our property and evidence procedures. And the latest talk around town are the in-car camera systems and our body camera systems that we have instituted. We instituted an official field training officer program this year. And we also collected 244 pounds of prescription medications in our drop box last year. These are medications that would have ended up somewhere or another in our environment that we took off the street or it could have ended up in the hands of a child. So as a reminder please do not hesitate to use that drop box, it's a mailbox and the lobby is always open, you could walk in and drop it right into the mailbox.

This coming year we are looking forward to establishing our Police Youth Explorer Program. A matter of fact on February 25<sup>th</sup> right here at 6:00 pm we have an informational meeting. So anyone between the ages of 14 and 21 who would like to join us, please do. This would allow a chance for our youth to interact with the police department and other first responders and see firsthand what we do.

So in closing the department is always looking for ways to operate more efficiently and effectively and we are working hard to stay connected with the people we serve. And we are dedicated to providing professional police services to such a wonderful community. Mr. Mayor thank you very much for this recognition. And congratulations on your award (directed to Lenny and Dawn Greico), thank you so much on behalf of the police department for your volunteering. Thank you.

Mayor Bonaccorso: This said earlier you know aggressive officers and the Chief has set standards. The Township Council has provided the Chief with a lot of tools that he's asked for to help. These automatic plate readers are a very, very big tool. We had one and I was very impressed on how it worked. We went to

the Council for funding and we now have three in the community which really, really helps us a lot. It reads your plate and if there's a warrant out for you where your car is not registered it will ping and give the officer a reason to pull you over. So remember to register your car because we all forget one time or another, trust me I know I have, but now you'll have a police officer on your tail because we are not the only town that has this, so always keep that as a reminder.

The other thing Chief I congratulate again the department but yourself on a very, very successful first year as our Police Chief. It's been a lot of fun to work with you and getting to know you on that level. You've been here a lot of years coming up through the ranks. Now the one bad thing you'll find that happens as an administrator who comes before us and gives us his wonderful report is what are you going to do next year for us. You keep up the good work and God Bless the men. We have great, great police officers in this community. And as he said you know when you hire an officer here we try to talk to them...if you want to kind of play cops and robbers go to Newark because we are not that type of community but we have an element of that. And as he said to you about helping citizens, I hear the radio all the time, we do respond to elderly people who have fallen and need help getting up, motor vehicle assistance when a car breaks down or lost dogs...you might say well that's Clark that's what our police officers have done here for as long as I could remember here, they know people and they'll always help. And what we always say and Chief I know you would want me to say this tonight, if you see something call, you'll never ever going to have an officer say "why did you bother us?" Call and have them tell you it's nothing, because when sometimes when you don't call that's when it's really something. Thank you very much. Congratulations Chief.

Motion to Resume the Regular Order of Business made by Councilwoman Albanese, seconded by Councilman O'Connor

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

### **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND REPORTS OF TOWNSHIP OFFICERS:**

Mayor Bonaccorso: Thank you Mr. President, Members of Council, ladies and gentlemen. First let me start from the last time we were here together. We had probably one of the biggest whopping snowstorms we had in a long, long time. About thirty inches of snow fell on our community late in January. I would like to take a moment to thank the Department of Public Works for doing a tremendous job. I would like to thank the citizens who have stopped me, Facebooked me, text message me, emailed me and literally have called me to congratulate the Department of Public Works on their great job. We know not every call was always positive but the good outweighed the bad by far. Folks thirty inches of snow...our DPW started working if I want to remember time lines right I believe at 5:00 am on Saturday of the snowstorm, they went home 9:00 Sunday morning. They didn't even take a dinner break much to my anguish I wished they would have because you need to do that when you are out working that many hours. They worked around the clock. They worked out in white out conditions. A white out condition is when you are plowing is there's so much snow falling at such a fast pace that you literally can't see beyond the plow of the truck, your eyes go like from seeing all the white hit. I know myself in my own business and I do very little plowing especially comparing to the DPW but very little that I had to quit on Saturday afternoon because I couldn't see out the windows of my truck anymore. And it does aggravate me when I look on a Facebook page and I hear someone saying that the plow hasn't been down my street yet. Well we are in a midst of a blizzard, you can't go anywhere anyway because maybe they came down your street but I can tell you that Raritan, Westfield, Madison Hill, Central and all those streets are snowed in also, so like what's the complaint? You

know it's a little troublesome to hear that when the snow is falling quicker than you could literally plow it and people are saying I haven't seen a plow yet. We have thirteen plows out, there's different zones, there's two trucks in every zone. I heard a really good one come back to me from the Chief that a citizen said to one of his officers "streets should be plowed in the amount of taxes you pay, the higher tax payers get the plows first and the lower taxpayers don't." Now you can make an argument for that I guess if you are paying high taxes. But here's what I have to say, how about if you have a modest street and you decide to build a mc-mansion in the middle of it, should we just plow out in front of your house and leave the rest for your neighbors, it's ridiculous that's the point. We have zones and our men start at an area of a zone, they finish in an area of a zone. If you are on the end of that, well we're sorry, but it's the best way they laid out how to attack a zone prior to me and the members of this council, it's been here for many, many years. We have new streets in town we have to get to over the years and we do. We take care of the police department, the fire department, the first aid squad and the schools handle themselves. In the past we've helped them but they have that under control right now. So you know I went down some areas of the town, I was personally out working with Scott McCabe in the days after the snow. Some areas folks your streets are just not wide enough. And when you have thirty inches of snow you have a problem. All cars should be removed off the streets. We are going to revisit that ordinance again; we may have to add some streets to that. And the streets that have cars removed off from them actually it worked out pretty good.

Now the other thing we have during the snow is when the plow goes down the street we have people upset that they just shoveled the end of their driveway out and they filled it up. Where are they supposed to push it? When you push snow you push it on an angle. We're sorry that happens. None of us likes to deal with that. The members of council take care of their homes and they have to shovel it out, I do. But the point is we had one street that one of the councilman called me and said "Mayor they want their street re-plowed again" and I said "then they are going to call up later and tell me that they plowed my driveway in," you can't have it both ways. Scott McCabe came to me the day after the storm and he said "Mayor there's a couple of things that I wasn't happy with" and I said "Scott let me tell you something, there were some things that I saw that if we had six to twelve inches of snow, you be in deep." The fact that we had thirty inches it's completely understandable. We have high standards; I do hold the department to a high standard. But with thirty inches it's basically every man for themselves out there. I hate to say it that way but they did a good job and I'm very proud of them and again thanking everybody for that.

The other thing that I'm very proud of is that there was a report last week on [newjersey.com](http://newjersey.com) a beautiful article that has shown Clark Township under our tutelage here for the last fifteen years has had the lowest tax increases in all of Union County and that was by far, that was by far. I believe our tax increases over the last fifteen years went up 20.54 %. Our State Aid hasn't gone up, okay, we've had some ratables come in that help. But it's a job of course as we all know our Administrator John Laezza and my administration working with him and the Township Council for working with us to get it done. I would also like to take a moment to thank all my department heads and employees who do work with us year in and year out to help try to provide these kind of great statistics for all of us in town. You can say well Mayor you want to brag about low tax increases, well in New Jersey everyone know there will always be some sort of tax increase unfortunately. The system is really built that way if you really want talk about it someday I'd love to educate you to it because it's actually mind boggling when you hear some of the things that we have to deal with. But being the lowest tax increase over fifteen years is something that I'm really proud of because we provide more services than any other town in Union County, that's a fact. Starting with Ralph's department and what he does, what our DPW does, with our monthly bulky cleanup, with our monthly branch cleanup, we never say no. We are going to be out their March 15<sup>th</sup> this year weather permitting, you are going to throw your branches and your lawn cleanups out into the street and we are going to come and take it for

you. We do all that including metal pickup and appliance pickup and we're so very, very proud and there's more to that too. But I want to again thank everyone and of course you John who really brought a lot of fiscal discipline to this town when you came in with me fifteen years ago. We were on the verge of bankruptcy fifteen years ago, it was a mess financially and we pulled it together and we were disciplined and we were steady in what we did and that's the way it's going to be as long we're here. We are going to keep that tradition constantly going. Things improve at a slow pace on what we can afford, not what we would like. We would all like to give a lot more but we just can't always afford to do that for you.

Secondly, I would like to thank Bill Caruso, the UNICO organization Ralph is President, and the Veterans organizations in town. Myself and many councilmen attended on Valentine's Day the 100<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Frank Sinatra's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday at the Gran Centurions. It was a nice evening. The proceeds to that though more importantly go to a beautiful monument that will be erected in front of town hall for female Veterans who served our country. So we think that's a very, very viable reason to come out. And also proceeds to the Wounded Warriors as a donation. So that was a daily double that night of good things that we all came out and attended and had a very, very nice evening. I would also like to thank the wonderful ladies of the Winter Benefit Ball who we had about 260 people attend that in early February. The Nerds played and it's a town wide fundraiser. Everyone seemed to have a great time. I want to thank you all out there who donated too it and attended it, it was a nice, nice evening.

Also as I said a moment ago I can't believe we are already talking this way but thank God we are... March is almost here, so we are in mid-February. March 15<sup>th</sup> if the weather is permitting, sometimes it doesn't, but you are going to be allowed to put your branches back into the street, clean off your lawn and you can put any debris that has collected on your lawn in the street till mid-April. We will be around weekly to pick that up for you to have your yards nice and clean when winter goes away and spring pops its beautiful head up. So that concludes my report for tonight Mr. President, Members of Council, ladies and gentlemen thank you.

Township Clerk: I have the Police, Fire, Emergency Management and First Aid Squad reports for the month of January 2016 received and on file in my office.

### **REPORT OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:**

Councilwoman Albanese: Thank you President Hund. Good evening everyone, I just want to mention a couple of events that are coming up at our Library. The first is on Sunday, February 28<sup>th</sup> which is "Take your Child to the Library Day." And the event will run from 1:00 to 5:00 pm but at 2:00 there will be a free concert, Palace of Wonders Concert featuring Ira and Julia Levin. And Julie and Ira have been escapading as Uncle Eye as seen on PBS Kids and Julia has been inciting riots of elation from California to Scotland creating wacky interactive kids acoustic rock that promotes literacy, the care of the environment and dignity for all of the chickens and all the wild battling boredom. So that in addition to the concert there will be free ice cream sundaes and a raffle prize donated by the Friends of the Library. On Monday, February 29<sup>th</sup> there will be a program for investors, "An Investors Workshop." It will focus on identifying the type of investor you are, helping you to choose how to trade and invest, select investments, and keep informed about what you invest in and how to recognize red flags that might come up with the investments that you have. The program is being run by the Investor Advocacy Project from Seton Hall University School of Law. And there will be a question and answer period following that presentation. That is from 3 to 4 on Monday, February 29<sup>th</sup>. On March 2<sup>nd</sup> we have "Read Across America Day" at the Library. That will be a celebration after school with stories and activities. We had about 100 people there last year, so we are

looking for a big turnout. And Shop Rite’s Bakers will be providing a Birthday Cake to commemorate Dr. Seuss’s Birthday. And then also on March 6<sup>th</sup> the Fossil Dig Program with Pearl Observatory. It’s a great program for kids 5 years old and up. They will get a chance to check out real fossils and participate

with digging and finding and identifying real fossils. This is a Marine Fossil Dig. So all you fossil hunters who are interested in shark teeth, coral, urchin spines, dolphin teeth and more don’t forget to show up on March 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday at 2:00 pm.

I do want express a special thank you to Henry Varriano for his generous contributions again this year to continue supporting the Library with its membership for the Grounds for Sculpture Museum. So again that’s an annual pass that’s available to our citizens to go and visit that museum. So there are other museum passes available which I’ve mentioned in the past. One other announcement I’ll mention later during comments. And that concludes my report thank you.

Councilman Barr: Thank you Mr. President. The police dispatcher had the Clark Volunteer Fire Department respond to 46 calls in January. And the fire department also asked me to tell everyone about a very important safety issue. We’re talking about a safety issue carbon monoxide and because of this time of the year it can be deadly. You should have numerous CO alarms throughout your house because people think they have a fire alarm and that takes care of it, that doesn’t take care of a CO alarm. And especially now with the snow what’s been happening and I think you have probably read some incidences where there were major problems. When you are warming up a vehicle move it out of the garage. Do not run a fueled engine indoors even if the garage doors are opened. And make sure that the exhaust pipe of the running vehicle is not blocked by any snow. A lot of people will, when they are shoveling they’ll take and move their car and they back it into a snowbank and then if they feel they are going to be moving soon they’ll leave the engine running or if they are sitting in it, it could be deadly folks. So especially during and after a snow storm make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of any snow buildup. And it’s really important because as I said there have been many articles that I read in the paper that people have been either sicken or some of whom have died. So remember the CO is very, very important to take measures against. And that concludes my report.

Councilman Mazzarella: Yes, thank you Council President. February 27<sup>th</sup> will be the next electronic drop off date from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm in the DPW yard. Please bring your computers, monitors, televisions, laptops and E books only. Fluorescent bulbs 2’, 4’, 6’, and 8’ also round and “U” shaped will be accepted and your Clark ID will be required to drop those items off. Bulky and metal pickup begins in March weather permitting. Appointments are required and you can email [dpw@ourclark.com](mailto:dpw@ourclark.com) or call 732-428-8402.

Spring cleanup I believe the Mayor has mentioned that is scheduled to begin mid-March weather permitting. Do not put any yard debris or branches out until March 19<sup>th</sup> (weather permitting). And please leave it one foot from the curb because we don’t want to have any debris going into our catch basins and this will allow water flow to pass through our streets. Pot holes can be reported too for repair at [dpw@ourclark.com](mailto:dpw@ourclark.com).

The next recycle date will be February 29<sup>th</sup> and remember we are single stream recycling community, which means that materials can go in one can; paper, cardboard, bottles, cans and etc. We also accept Styrofoam. Please break cardboard boxes down flat before you put them out. And grass pickup weather permitting again will begin April 18, 2016. Thank you and that’s the extent of my report.

Councilman O'Connor: Thank you very much, I have three reports this evening. From the Finance Committee tonight there will be a resolution for the introduction of the 2016 Municipal Budget.

From the Emergency Management Group; some activities that have happened in the past few months. They have completed their annual CPR AED Certifications Reclassification Classes for 20 of our C.E.R.T people, and that was from November through January. And C.E.R.T stands for Community Emergency Response Team. Right now there's actually a class that just began February 2<sup>nd</sup> and it has about 8 to 10 people in it. I believe Councilwoman Albanese is a participate in that class, (Councilwoman Albanese: that's correct.) excellent thank you. Also the township continues to work on to change over on the AM radio station from 1700 am to 590 am. And this will allow more information to be broadcast because it's a wider band. So they are looking forward to in the future having more information provided to the people on 590 am. Additionally they are having information put on TV 36 and 590 am with regards to the winter storm and with this winter storm that was up they spent time preparing for it by filling vehicles, spare gas cans along with checking the portable generators in the event that there were needed because of power outage situations. And fortunately for us that wasn't the case and they weren't needed but please know they were prepared.

And from the Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad; the Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2016. During the month of January, the Squad represented the township at the Union County EMS Council Quarterly Meeting where discussions on EMS Mutual Aid, MCI drills and the County Grants were discussed as well as demonstrations of the County's new portable oxygen truck. During the blizzard weekend the Squad had a dozen members manning the building and available to respond to medical emergencies. So they were prepared to help out and as Sal had talked about there's a lot of volunteers amongst this community. And again these are not paid people, they are here to volunteer their time and they were there at that Squad house rather than being with their families in a thirty-inch snow storm. So thank you very much for that. The Squad provided free blood pressure screenings and distributed first aid information at Whole Foods. Whole Foods supported the Squad by donating a percentage of their sales of that day to the Squad.

With regard to the Clark call volume for the Emergency Squad; there were 111 calls in the month of January, 100 were from Clark and the other 11 were from neighboring communities in mutual aid for Garwood, Cranford, Linden, Rahway, Scotch Plains and Westfield. The Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad has also shared it's building to provide services and support as followings; monthly blood drives, Girl Scout Gold Award Ceremony and True Vital Weight from St. John the Apostle. And again there is always time for more members at the Squad. The Squad has multiplying levels of membership available to those interested in joining; Cadets which are individuals under the age of 18, Regular Members at least 18 years of age and in drivers at least 18 years old. All training is provided free by the Squad and if anyone is interested they can email the Squad at [membership@clarkems.org](mailto:membership@clarkems.org). And please check and like them on Facebook and visit their webpage [www.clarkems.org](http://www.clarkems.org). And that concludes report, thank you.

Councilman Smith: Thank you President Hund. From the Recreation Department the supplement for the Spring/Fall programs and classes is now available. It's being distributed throughout the schools and available at the Recreation Center. Ralph asked that you sign up early as many of these classes fill up to capacity. On Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> is the Clark Family Skate Night. We have rented out the Woodbridge Skating Facility for Clark residents family and friends from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Tickets are available at the Recreation Center as well as at the door. Prices are \$4.00 for children, \$5.00 for adults and skate rentals are also available.

And lastly in March the Easter Egg Hunt is going to be early this year and it will on Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Recreation Center between 12 and 2:00 pm. And that concludes my report for this evening,

Councilman Toal: Thank you Mr. President. The Clark Environmental Commission resumed their activities and held a re-organization meeting on Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. A full quorum was in attendance and they returned Kevin Koch as the Chairman. The Environmental Commission has set up an outline of meetings dates as well as to discuss what they basically want to do this year beside river cleanups. They want to talk about the Reservoir in Clark. So they will be having a full discussion on that at their next meeting which will March 24<sup>th</sup> where they will be discussing the issues of the Reservoir, the future of the Reservoir and then working with the Union County representatives to what is going to happen to the Reservoir. So with that I invite all of the residents to come out if you like attend the meeting, it is open to the public, and we will have the discussion on the Reservoir at the next meeting.

The next issue is the Township of Clark’s newsletter. The newsletter I’ve been handing it out. I got stopped this past weekend because it got down to minus 15 outside if you haven’t notice or weren’t outside. And I’m going to be going in the Cornell area, Ivy Street and Gertrude Street this coming weekend, so I hope to see you soon. Some of the people said to me that they haven’t received one, well you know I didn’t get to your door yet. I’m still working on that because I go door to door myself and the format has been changed. It’s a little bit different, it’s much more high tech and I thank the Mayor for that. So with that Mr. President I end my comments.

Council President Hund: For myself, I have the Clark Police Department monthly report for January 2016 saw a total of 3,274 calls for services of which 83 were ambulance requests, 4 were fire department requests, 4 were vandalism, 16 were motor vehicle and resident lockouts, 108 were alarm calls, 83 were motor vehicle accidents and 2,948 were miscellaneous calls for a total of 300 adult arrests including 2 for theft, 1 for simple assault, 1 for unlawful use of credit cards, 1 for criminal mischief, 10 for drug abuse, 3 for DUI and 12 warrants. And that concludes my report for this month.

**ORDINANCES, APPROPRIATIONS AND CLAIMS:**

**PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED ORDINANCES:**

(No objections have been received in connection with the proposed Ordinance)

**Ordinance 16-01**

**AN ORDINANCE TO SUPPLEMENT CHAPTER 145 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CLARK ENTITLED “FEES” TO ADD A SECTION ENTITLED “RECREATION DEPARTMENT”**

Council President Hund opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 16-01

Seeing no one coming forward Councilman Mazzarella made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilman O’Connor

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Motion to adopt Ordinance made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman O’Connor

Discussion: None

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Ordinance Adopted

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**Ordinance 16-02**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND VARIOUS SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 3, ARTICLE 8, SECTION 3-30 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CLARK ENTITLED "VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT"**

Council President Hund opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 16-02

Seeing no one coming forward Councilwoman Albanese made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilman Mazzarella

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Motion to adopt Ordinance made by Councilman Barr, seconded by Councilwoman Albanese

Discussion: None

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Ordinance Adopted

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**Ordinance 16-03**

**AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A. 4-45.14)**

Council President Hund opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 16-03

Seeing no one coming forward Councilman O'Connor made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilman Toal

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Motion to adopt Ordinance made by Councilman O'Connor, seconded by Councilwoman Albanese

Discussion: None

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund.

Ordinance Adopted

**PAYMENT OF CLAIMS:** Councilman O’Connor, Chairman of Finance Committee made a motion to approve the payment of claims on current and capital expenditures in the amount of \$227,435.63 for the period ending February 10, 2016, seconded by Councilwoman Albanese

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

**CITIZEN HEARING ON THE AGENDA:**

Each person addressing the Council shall first give his/her name and address to the Clerk. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and shall not exceed 10 minutes in duration.

Council President Hund opened the Citizen Hearing on the Agenda

Seeing no one coming forward Councilwoman Albanese made a motion to close the Citizen Hearing on the Agenda, seconded by Councilman Smith

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O’Connor. Smith, Toal, Hund

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 16-35**

**Municipal Budget of the Township of Clark County of Union for Calendar Year 2016**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the following statements of revenues and appropriations shall constitute the Municipal Budget for the year 2016:

**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT  
SUMMARY OF CURRENT FUND SECTION OF APPROVED BUDGET YEAR 2016**

General Appropriation For:

- |                                                                           |  |               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| 1. Appropriations within “CAPS”:                                          |  |               |
| (a) Municipal Purposes (Item H-1, Sheet 19) (N.J.S.40A:4-45.2)            |  | 16,630,723.00 |
| 2. Appropriations excluded from “CAPS”                                    |  |               |
| (a) Municipal Purposes (Item H-2, Sheet 28) (N.J.S.40A:4-45.3 as amended) |  | 4,679,028.43  |
| (b) Local District School Purposes in Municipal Budget (Item K, Sheet 29) |  | -             |
| Total General Appropriations excluded from “CAP” (Item O, Sheet 29)       |  | 4,679,028.43  |

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3. Reserve for Uncollected Taxes (Item M. Sheet 29) – Based on Estimated <u>98.53</u> Percent of Tax Collections	800,000.00	
4. Total General Appropriations (Item 9, Sheet 29) Building Aid Allowance 2016 for Schools –State Aid 2015 \$_____	22,109,751.43	
5. Less: Anticipated Revenues Other Than Current Property Tax (Item 5, Sheet 11) (i.e. Surplus, Miscellaneous Revenues and Receipts from Delinquent Taxes)	5,768,818.43	
6. Difference: Amount to be Raised by Taxes for Support of Municipal Budget (as follows)		
(a) Local Tax for Municipal Purposes Including Reserve for Uncollected Taxes (Item 6(a), Sheet 11)	15,514,919.00	
(b) Addition to Local District School Tax (Item 6(b), Sheet 11)	-	
(c) Minimum Library Tax	826,014.00	

**BE IT RESOLVED** that notice is hereby given that the Budget and Tax Resolution was introduced by the Municipal Council of the Township of Clark, County of Union on February 16, 2016; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that said Budget be published in summary in the Union County LocalSource in the issue of March 3, 2016; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a Regular Meeting for the hearing on the Budget and Tax Resolution will be held at the Municipal Council Chambers, 315 Westfield Avenue, on March 21, 2016 at 7:30 pm at which time and place objections to said Budget and Tax Resolution for the year 2016 may be presented by the taxpayers or other interested persons.

Discussion:

John Laezza: Basically the Public Hearing will be on March 21<sup>st</sup>. I think this is a document that basically affects the shortfall and revenues we received with a balance of last year. We had some four hundred and seventeen thousand dollars in tax appeals that we had to pay so our revenues were down. This Budget is being introduced in coordination with the user friendly budget where each of the operations of government are in place; the current fund budgets the Sewer Utility and the Swim Pool Utility. And if you look at that budget document it will show that our revenues are down in excess of seven hundred thousand dollars but if you review the appropriations, the total of appropriations have increased for the total of all agencies by seven-two thousand. So we've made an effort to cut back on our expenditures to offset the shortfall and revenues and we have a budget that will reflect a 2.6 tax points which is twenty-six dollars for a hundred thousand dollars property. A 1.28 percent increase overall of the tax levy. So we think we've accommodated the needs of our department heads to provide the services as well our fiscal needs.

Mayor Bonaccorso: On the January meeting I did my State of the Township report and at that meeting I talked about having a zero tax increase for the first time in my fifteen years as the Mayor of this town. I was quite excited about it with some of the new ratables we had in place and we believed at the time we would be able to do it. To now look at a very small minimal tax increase of 1.28% or 2.6 tax points total which is about \$26.00 a home (on the average home) I need to apologize to the community. When we were setting our budget John and I, everything was looking very strong for that and I was quite excited. What we have had then is a problem in shortfall in recurring revenues. Now the thing is we have tax appeals of four hundred and seventeen thousand dollars, as you (Council) all know but I'm going to explain it to the public. We the Township of Clark collect the taxes for the school board and for the County. We are a collecting agency. We collect the money from you the taxpayers and we pay them. The problem is we get the smallest piece of the pie as you all know. Compound that with when there are four hundred and seventeen thousand dollars in tax appeals which is approximately six tax points we have to eat it. We do not get the revenue back from the school or from the County. So when there's a tax appeal and this has been talked about since

I've been on Council back in the 90's about how unfair this is, it is, but it's a way of life. We had a few areas such in Construction without any big ratables being built this year that we are not going to have the reoccurring permit fees to help offset some of the costs, so we had to make alliances for there too.

Now on the bright side it's a very minimal increase. As you have seen earlier tonight we are the lowest increases over fifteen years in Union County by far, so we are still very proud with that. In having this minimal increase of 1.28 percent we are providing all the services that everyone has become accustomed too. We have a full TO in our police department etc. and so on. The bottom line here is I wish I would have waited a little bit longer but I was pretty enthusiastic to try to see the way our revenues were looking at that time to do this, so I do apologize for that. This is very much in the norm for our type of community. Now some people might say "well you have the Clark Commons and you have different projects, where does all the money go?" Folks all the money went to the school district first, the County second, the Township third, okay. Hopefully with the kind of revenue the school district is taking in maybe they'll see a decrease this year which will net and wash everything out. We are hoping for that if some of our calculations are done because they have a two percent budget cap as we do. So you can only go up two percent and with money coming in they might be in very, very good shape. But I don't want to speak for the Board of Education because it would be unfair for me to do at this point, that's just our early calculations. So again I do apologize for that Council, I do apologize to that ladies and gentlemen of Clark. It is a minimal increase of 1.28 % in keeping our township serviced and running the way we all became accustomed too and like it. Any questions from the Council? okay thank you very much.

Councilwoman Albanese: I just have a comment. First of all, I just want to say I appreciate getting this done so timely with all the utilities that we have in the township, so thank you again John for you and your team. You know and also I think the Mayor really shouldn't need to apologize. We've talked tonight about an article that was on nj.com and there was a big article in the Star Ledger yesterday about the tax increase that Clark has had over the fifteen years of twenty percent. And just to put that into perspective because I don't want to repeat what the Mayor said. The average for the State was forty-four percent over those fifteen years, so we were well below half of that. And then there were neighboring towns that were almost sixty percent and then you take a city like Elizabeth that had a seventy percent increase over the course of those years. It gives you an idea of the order of magnitude. When we sit and do our budget we don't look at what the other towns are doing, we just do it. You know John is here and the administration has been very conservative and conscientious about how money is spent, they prioritize well. We've paid off our debt which we've talked about in the past; as we've spent money we pay off debt and that all contributes to getting those increases as low as they are. So thank you for your efforts and if anyone has any questions they can talk to the administration or myself and the members of the finance committee, thank you.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Mr. President I would like to say one other thing if I can. I grew up on a council that every election year the budget increase was zero and every non-election year it was either nine tax points or double digit. Buyer beware we could have done the same game here. We could have held my word true and did some smoke and mirrors and present as zero this year and next year the community would have gotten wacked and we probably would have had to cut some services to come under the tax levy. So it's not just one night of satisfaction, it's a continuous saga of doing things the right way and keeping our chin up and presenting the facts to the public of this community. So that's what we want to understand because we could have played that game and we chose not too because we haven't played that game before. It is what it is and what it is it is, so thank you.

No further discussion

Moved by Councilman O'Connor, seconded by Councilwoman Albanese

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

**CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 16-36**

**WHEREAS** in accordance with a request from the Tax Collector for authorization to refund and/or transfer overpayment of taxes; the Mayor has recommended to Council that such authorization be granted.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, that the Chief Financial Officer is hereby authorized and directed to make refund(s) and/or transfer(s) in accordance with the attached schedule:

CLARK TOWNSHIP									
TAX REFUNDS- 2016									
BLOC K	LO T	QUAL.	NAME	#	ADDRESS	REFUND	AMT TRNS	TRANS FROM	TRANS TO
24	3		Dominic Giagaglione	16	Kennedy Drive	\$ 388.40			
13	3		Patrick Cook	5	Orchard Terrace	\$ 2,817.98			
176	49		Beverly Cunningham	45	Lupine Way		\$540.46	2015/2	2015/4
120	14		Joshua Bettinger	13	Nassau Street	\$ 2,203.91			
173	28		Rosemary Gillespie	20	Miller Avenue	\$ 3,916.36			
			<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$ 9,326.65</b>	<b>\$540.46</b>		

**Resolution 16-37**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, County of Union, New Jersey that it does hereby authorize the Tax Collector to settle Tax Appeal(s) and Issue Refund(s) and or Credit in the amounts indicated as authorized by the Tax Court of New Jersey in accordance with the attached schedule.

STATE TAX APPEAL - APPROVAL 2/16/2016							
-	-	<u>Original</u>	<u>New</u>	-	-	-	-
<u>Block/Lot</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Reduction</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Refund</u>	<u>Credit</u>
63/46.01	472 Westfield Avenue	264,200	204,200	60,000	2014		\$ 4,713.00
63/46.01	472 Westfield Avenue	264,200	204,200	60,000	2015		\$ 4,814.41
					Principal		\$ 9,527.41

					5% Int.		Waived
					Total		\$ 9,527.41
91/18	67 Westfield Avenue	580,100	550,100	30,000	2012		\$ 2,283.90
91/18	67 Westfield Avenue	580,100	555,100	25,000	2013		\$ 1,936.75
91/18	67 Westfield Avenue	580,100	555,100	25,000	2014		\$ 1,963.76
					Principal		\$ 6,184.41
					5% Int.		Waived
					Total		\$ 6,184.41
135/18	57 Brant Avenue	422,800	345,500	77,300	2009		\$ 5,412.55
135/18	57 Brant Avenue	422,800	354,100	68,700	2010	\$1,841.35	\$3,069.32
135/18	57 Brant Avenue	422,800	359,900	62,900	2011	\$4,640.14	
135/18	57 Brant Avenue	422,800	342,800	80,000	2012	\$6,090.40	
135/18	57 Brant Avenue	422,900	342,000	80,800	2013	\$ 6,259.58	
					Principal	\$18,831.47	\$8,481.87
					5% Int.	Waived	
					Total	\$18,831.47	\$8,481.87
144/2.01	100 Walnut Avenue	8,000,000	7,900,000	100,000	2010		\$7,148.00
144/2.01	100 Walnut Avenue	8,000,000	7,700,000	300,000	2011		\$ 22,131.00
144/2.01	100 Walnut Avenue	8,000,000	6,800,000	1,200,000	2012		\$ 91,356.00
144/2.01	100 Walnut Avenue	8,000,000	7,700,000	300,000	2013		\$ 23,241.00
144/2.01	100 Walnut Avenue	8,000,000	7,800,000	200,000	2014		\$ 15,710.00
					Principal		\$159,586.00
					5% Int.		Waived
					Total		\$159,586.00

**Resolution 16-38**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark that Clark resident, Marc Hayden is hereby appointed as Alternate II Member of the Environmental Commission for an initial one-year term effective 02/16/16 to 12/31/16

Motion to adopt Consent Agenda made by Councilman Toal, seconded by Councilman Barr

Council President Hund directed roll call:  
 Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

**NEW BUSINESS ON THE CALENDAR:** None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Each person addressing the Council shall first give his/her name and address to the Clerk. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and shall not exceed 10 minutes in duration.

Council President Hund opened the public portion of the meeting

Seeing no one coming forward Councilwoman Albanese made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting, seconded by Councilman O’Connor

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

**MAYOR, COUNCIL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMENTS:**

Mayor Bonaccorso: I just have to say this because I’ve been on this all day today so please excuse me for being a critic of the Washington DC politicians. We had a Chief Justice pass away over the weekend. And here’s what’s wrong with politics in American today. It’s happened on a local level and goes right up through the County, State and of course the Federal Government. You have a Justice pass away and you now have a vacancy. You have a Democratic President who is saying I’m going to appoint. You have a Republican Congress saying we are not going to let you. What’s wrong with the picture? What’s wrong with the picture? That two sides in this country in today’s world can’t sit down and find a compromise candidate that both parties can think would be an exemplary individual on our Supreme Court. It’s sad in this country. We are going through primaries right now and I’m very interested. I watch them all the time. I’m an advocate of it I enjoy it. And you have some really good things happening and some characters out there also. But the point I’m trying to say to you is when you have a President and a Congress who can’t sit down in a room and come up with a compromise candidate for the Supreme Court, what does it tell you about our government in Washington? Folks we are in real trouble; we are in real trouble. There isn’t one male or female who is a Justice in this country who couldn’t serve this country properly in the eyes of either party. We are in a sad state of affairs. That’s my commentary tonight. I like to give these opinions because they are really started to gnaw at me. I hope they gnaw at you and I hope we write to our Congressmen and our Senators and tell them that Washington has got to stop. Because we hear all these wonderful suggestions and promises by all these politicians on both size of the isle that are running for President now and how everything is going to change under them but unfortunately the two parties cannot pick a Justice, that’s sad. Thank you.

Councilwoman Albanese: Thank you. I forgot to mention one item of an art exhibit that’s being conducted at the Library. And it’s sponsored by the Portuguese American Culture Association of Clark. And the exhibit is on view from January 23<sup>rd</sup> through February 21<sup>st</sup>, I guess that’s the important date to keep in mind. And it’s the art of Jose Sobral deAlmada Negreiros who lived from 1893 to 1970. And there are a series of panels that depict the immigration in general. But he was an interesting artist and a painter, a draftsman, a writer, a costume designer and set designer. He was involved in many different times of arts.

So hopefully you can stop by and take a look at that fantastic art exhibit that the Cultural Association approached the Library to present. So we are really pleased to have that art work on exhibit.

Another point I want to mention is some of the senior citizens in town are familiar with the property tax relief program. The Division of Taxation has begun mailing the applications for property tax relief. So if you are a senior citizen you can get your taxes frozen and it's also eligible for disabled residents. The forms are due in June 2016. So this is the eighteen year of that program you might want to take advantage of it.

I don't want to take too much time but congratulations to our police department and to our citizens who are the high rating on low crimes. I know in talking to the citizens of our community one of the top reasons they like living in Clark and have moved here is because they know it's a safe place to live. They enjoy seeing the patrol cars coming by, the patrols done in Clark and the fact that it is so safe a place to live in.

Councilman Barr: Thank you very much Mr. President. I'm hoping everyone has listened to everything that was said tonight about all the services we have, the lowest taxes raised in Union County from 2000 to 2015 and our safety record. I've been in Clark for 45 years now and I would like to say and I mean this, which I tell people when I'm out shopping and I see them and I mean this sincerely from my heart, this Mayor and Council sincerely cares about Clark and its residents, and I mean that. Thank you Mr. President.

Councilman Mazzarella: Yes, thank you Council President. Ladies and gentlemen, as the Mayor had said we have a safe community; 44<sup>th</sup> in New Jersey and #1 in Union County. That speaks volumes on how safe our community is. And I want to take this opportunity to thank our Chief, Chief Matos and our PD personnel for keeping our community safe for all our residents and the people that travel through our community. As I said before they are here to serve and protect everyone in our community. And I'm grateful to you and our police department for their efforts, thank you on that.

Next I would like to just mention that I congratulate Lenny and Dawn. I got to know Lenny and Dawn through Joe Bonaccorso. He once told me he said "you know Lenny and Dawn they are good people, they are here and they are always here and they want to help," and he's right. I want to thank them for their efforts on their volunteerism and their commitment to our community.

And our tax rate it's phenomenal, our tax rate is the lowest in Union County and again that speaks volumes of what we have done. Our administration with the Mayor's leadership and John's on what we've accomplished and tightening our belt keeping the services that you have come to expect and trimming where it is necessary. With that said until next month please be safe and don't forget to recycle, it's very important for our future, thank you.

Councilman O'Connor: Thank you very much. As you all know I'm not big on repeating everything that's been said. So my comments echo those of the previous Council people that have spoken. However, I will add one thing. I had the opportunity to meet a lot of residents at the Senior Housing. And they asked me of one favor, can you please stop referring to us as Senior Housing, we are Woodcrest at Clark. So going forward we will try our hardest, it's Woodcrest at Clark not Senior Housing. Thank you very much, those are my comments.

Councilman Smith: Thank you. I just also want to thank DPW after the blizzard and during the blizzard for clearing our streets. I live on a dead end street. And I was probably one of the last streets to be plowed. They only went down it once, one lane down the center because that's all they could do and there was no

place to move the snow. I had many phone calls from town residents saying they weren't down my street which I knew they were or they were only down it once. And I said come live on Charles Street we were the last street to get plowed. I still had persistence on residents calling, so I called Scott McCabe. And I said "please do me a favor go down the street again and plow it" and he said "I'm going to block them in" and I said "at this point I don't care, they want their street plowed." They plowed the street. I get a phone call saying you blocked my driveway in. I said "well what do you want?" You know you can't have it both ways people. The Mayor said that earlier. So they did a great job and I appreciate all their efforts. And it was a very long and arduous job that they did.

And lastly please come on out for the Skate Night on the 27<sup>th</sup>. It's a fun event for the town and Ralph does a great job with it. And that's all I have this evening thank you.

Councilman Toal: Thank you. Yes, the storm and I'll just throw it on the Mayor said it all and everyone said it all. Scott McCabe thank you so much and to every member of the Public Works Department who were in those trucks around the clock and everything you did. I had eight residents in my Fourth Ward screaming at me that they couldn't get out of their house, it was horrible. And I wasn't going to call the Mayor but I was able to call Scott and say "I need your help." And those simple words I need your help were answered. Those residents' needs were taken care of. They got to work and all was well. One resident did call me back and said thank you but the other seven I haven't heard from. But when the calls were made we received them, we took them, we listened, we understood their point of contention and we then tried to help them because that's what this is about. That's why we sit up here ladies and gentlemen, not to get yelled at but sometimes people get upset because it's the spur of the moment or the heat of the moment. But to Scott McCabe and to the Public Works Department to each and every one of the members on that department guys thank you.

To those we've lost in the last month; Veronica Haber, mother of John Haber former Public Works Forman. Liselotte Richardson, Mrs. Richardson lived on Cornell and was a long time member of the Deutscher Club and a long time Clark resident. Claire Ford, Mrs. Ford one of the original parishioners of St. Agnes. Eugene Erickman and to Rudy Daunno Sr. who was a staple in this township with the progress end of Clark and to the Daunno Family our deepest condolences, he will not be forgotten, what a good man.

In our lifetime in this township and when we get involved in the Township of Clark there are certain people who touch our lives and make us feel better and her name was Kathleen Leonard. She was one of those special people who did not live in Clark but took up a job in the Township of Clark. In 1989 I met a young lady who had just been the Assistant Clerk for the Borough of Garwood. Our Township Clerk Kay Clancy who had taken over for Ed Patusniak, Mr. Patusniak was the 1961 to 1986 Township Clerk and he ran everything in this town with an iron fist. But Mr. Patusniak did a lot for the town and Kay Clancy filled in for a couple of years until we met Kathleen Leonard. One of the sweetest Irish Colleen I've ever met in my life. Just a dear, dear woman who really didn't know enough about Clark. And I remember the first time I met her I said "Welcome to Clark, you are going to see it like you never have seen before, if you heard any rumors it's all true, enjoy" and that's all I said to her. I was not on council at the time, I was doing things for then Mayor Yarusavage. And we developed a friendship, that loyalty of Irish we called it taking care of our own. But her loyalty was to the citizens of Clark and making it a better community. And as I always say to you our beloved Clerk today you are the backbone of this council, you are the backbone of the paperwork and keeping the heart of the township running. Beyond the Clerk you don't get that. And Edie

we understand what you go through on a daily basis. Kathleen Leonard served from 1989 to 2007 when she retired and said I'm going to go home, play golf, and do other things with my family and enjoy

my grandchildren. And for her she made Clark a better place, she didn't even live here, she gave her heart and soul to it. We went recently and paid our respects to her, she died suddenly, but she had been getting older as we all do and our love and respect will always be with her family and her legacy will always be in the Clerk's Office. And Edie is continuing keeping that light shining bright. Mr. President and members of council she was a great lady and we will always, always remember Kathleen Leonard.

I will be knocking on your door with these (Report to the People). Hopefully it's not fifteen degrees this coming weekend. If you have any questions as Frank and the rest of the council members said we're here, it's very simple, we are here to make a better Clark. Thank you.

Police Chief Matos: No thank you.

Township Clerk: Yes Mr. President. I couldn't have said it better than Councilman Toal about Kathy Leonard. She was my boss for five years. She taught me a lot. She retired and I wish she had a longer retirement. We paid our respects as Councilman Toal had said and I would like to said it again to her husband Jim, her daughters Cindy and Tara and her son Jimmy that we will miss her but we will never forget her. Thank you.

Council President Hund: My closing comments. On February 1<sup>st</sup> the Council, the Mayor and myself had a chance to visit the police department with Chief Matos giving us a tour of the entire department. It was very insightful and especially the command center. In looking outside of this building you will not expect what is inside the building. It's very high tech. We watched how 911 calls are received and how they are handled, how we can see where the police officers are and how quickly they respond to their calls and things of that sort. It was also the day that we received our body cams if I'm correct, that was the day we received them right Chief? So now the technology for both the cars and the body cams are in full force. So that will protect our township and our police officers in anything in the future that may happen. So that was a great tour Chief, I learned a lot that night. So thank you very much for taking all of us through there.

Secondly, I would like to congratulate the Mayor and Business Administrator for the last fifteen years of the job that they have done. And to reiterate on what Councilman O'Connor had said I won't repeat what everyone else had said, so thank you very much.

Councilman Barr: Mr. President can I just add one thing. When you were talking about that we went through the police department of all the different facilities that they have and it's unreal. But we also saw the jail, so don't be bad, you don't want to go there believe me. Thank you.

Council President Hund: Thank you Councilman Barr.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilwoman Albanese, seconded by Councilman Barr

Council President Hund directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

APPROVED

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STEVEN M. HUND  
Council President

ATTEST:

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EDITH L. MERKEL, RMC  
Township Clerk