

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, 315 WESTFIELD AVE., CLARK NJ
January 20, 2026

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Toal, Smith
Absent: Council Member Minniti

Also Present: Mayor Angel Albanese; James Ulrich, Business Administrator; Albert Cruz, Township Attorney, Nicole Castellucci, Acting Township Clerk; Elizabeth Clee, Director of Communications Business Development; Police Director Pat Grady; Officer in Charge Captain Miguel Acabou;

The Regular Meeting of the Municipal Council of the Township of Clark was called to order at 7:30 pm by Council President Smith. 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, The Leader (formerly Union County Hawk), and Union County Local Source, by posting such Annual Meeting Schedule on the Bulletin Board in Town Hall reserved for such announcements, the Official Website of the Township and the proper filing of said Notice. Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

Motion to Suspend the Regular Order of Business was made by Councilwoman Hoff, seconded by Councilman Hund

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

Presentation by Mayor Angel Albanese of the Municipal Alliance Award to Ralph Bernardo

- Mayor Angel Albanese and the Township Council, on behalf of the Township of Clark, formally honored Ralph Bernardo
- Recognized Ralph Bernardo as a cherished role model within the community
- Acknowledged his devotion as a loving husband, father, and grandfather
- Celebrated his lifelong spirit of service that inspires all who know him
- Commended his extraordinary contributions, heartfelt dedication, and lifelong service to the community
- Extended congratulations and sincere appreciation for his enduring impact

Ralph Bernardo:

- Expressed gratitude for the honor and recognition
- Thanked Mayor and Council for their continued support over the years

- Acknowledged support from prior administration during tenure
- Noted 15 years of service leading the Alliance, emphasizing its importance in supporting Clark's youth and substance abuse prevention efforts
- Recognized the dedicated committee members who supported the Alliance for 14 years
- Confirmed continued involvement as a volunteer after stepping down last year
- Thanked Andrew Calo and Tara Oliveira for assuming leadership and continuing the Alliance's mission
- Announced upcoming milestone of 20 years of service as Recreation Director, following four years as a part-time employee
- Shared passion and commitment to providing quality programs, events, and services to Clark residents
- Thanked Jimmy for budget guidance
- Acknowledged the essential role of volunteers, including high school Key Club, Cessa Club, parents, and community members
- Thanked local businesses, organizations, and departments for long-standing support and donations
- Gave special recognition to Emily Lambert for daily support and administrative assistance
- Thanked spouse, Karen, for ongoing understanding and support
- Concluded by expressing sincere appreciation and gratitude for the honor

Recognizing the Mother Seton Girls Volleyball Team and presentation of certificates

- Announced historic achievement by Mother Seton Regional High School, marking the first time in school history attaining this level of success
- Reported 2025 season record of 26 wins and 3 losses
- Recognized team as White Division Champions
- Noted Mother Seton as GMC Tournament Finalists
- Recognized South Jersey Non-Public B Champions
- Recognized Non-Public B State Champions
- Honored Head Coach Tom Moran for achieving 351 career wins over 29 seasons as head coach at Mother Seton Regional High School
- Acknowledged Coach Moran's additional honor as Conference Coach of the Year
- Recognized individual student-athlete achievements:
- Madison Porter: Third in the state with 7,447 career assists; set school single season assists record with 747
- Isabella Matias: Led the State of New Jersey with 622 digs; surpassed 1,000 career digs during the season
- Faith Fenza: Set school single season kills record with 290 as a freshman
- Annabelle Burns: Achieved 750 career digs; noted as the first non-libero position player in school history on track to reach 1,000 career digs
- Invited Head Coach Tom Moran to address the audience

Coach Tom Moran:

- Head Coach Tom Moran thanked the Mayor and Council for the honor

- Provided historical context, noting that the Township of Clark was established in 1864 and Mother Seton Regional High School opened in 1963
- Acknowledged Mother Seton’s long-standing presence and visibility within the Township of Clark
- Emphasized that the team’s success was the result of a collective effort from student-athletes, coaching staff, faculty, administration, families, and community support
- Described the season as a “magical” culmination of shared effort and commitment
- Expressed pride in the student athletes and gratitude for the recognition
- Noted the excitement and appreciation of the team members in attendance, with acknowledgment that some were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts
- Concluded by thanking the Mayor and Council again for the honor
- Provided brief explanations of volleyball statistics for clarification (assists, kills, and digs)

Principal, Mother Seton:

- Thanked the Township of Clark for the honor
- Expressed excitement and pride in the volleyball team’s achievement as State Champions
- Acknowledged Head Coach Tom Moran’s 351 wins over 29 years
- Recognized the strength of the school’s volleyball program at all levels, including varsity, junior varsity, and freshman teams
- Emphasized the school’s commitment to providing athletic opportunities for female student-athletes
- Shared personal connection to the volleyball program, noting prior role in founding and coaching the team for 13 years
- Congratulated the volleyball team and coaching staff on their success
- Noted volunteer coach participation and alumni involvement within the program

Motion to Resume the Regular Order of Business was made by Councilwoman Hoff, seconded by Councilman Mazzarella

Private Session:

Resolution 26-48

EXECUTIVE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS this Governing body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Township of Clark, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of an action upon the specified submit matter.

2. The general nature of the submit matters to be discussed as follows:
 - Litigation, Matthew J. Platkin v. Clark Township, Docket No. UNN-L-180-26
3. It is anticipated that the minutes on the subject matter of the closed session will be made public upon conclusion, dismissal or settlement of litigation; or final resolution of agreements on personnel matters; and in any event, when appropriate pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-7 and 4-13
4. The Council will come back into open session and may take further action.
5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Motion to go into Private at 7:54 pm was made by Councilwoman Hoff, seconded by Councilman Mazzarella

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

Motion to Resume the Public Meeting at 8:35 pm was made by Councilman Toal, seconded by Councilwoman Hoff

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

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR AND REPORTS OF TOWNSHIP OFFICERS:

Mayor Albanese:

- Expressed condolences on behalf of the Mayor and Township employees to Edie Merkel and family on the passing of her mother, Joan Laezza
- Noted that the Township's Resident Guide has been published online and is available to residents
 - Described the guide as a resource for new and current residents, including information on township services, collections, events, pool information, grass pickup, and leaf pickup
- Thanked the Public Works Department for its efforts during recent storms, including snow removal and salt spreading
- Provided an update regarding a complaint filed by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, Division of Civil Rights, against the Township on January 15
 - Stated that the Township is reviewing the complaint with legal counsel
 - Noted that the Township finds the alleged comments referenced in the complaint reprehensible and stated that they do not represent the Township, Council, employees, or the Clark Police Department

- Indicated that the Township intends to vigorously defend against the allegations
- Explained that due to active litigation, comments on the substance of the complaint are limited based on legal counsel's advice
- Recounted that in July 2020, the Attorney General's Office assumed supersession of the Clark Police Department
- Noted that during the supersession, the Attorney General's Office conducted a comprehensive review of policies, procedures, personnel, and operations
- Reported that in March 2025, control of the Clark Police Department was returned to the Township under Officer-in-Charge Miguel Acabou
- Cited a letter from Attorney General Matthew Platkin acknowledging reforms implemented during the supersession period
- Noted that a monitorship was established following the return of control, which the Township welcomed
- Stated that no findings of concern were identified during the nearly five-year supersession period
- Reaffirmed the Township's position that Clark is a welcoming community committed to serving all residents

Township Clerk: Reports given this evening will be available in the Clerk's office and on the township website www.ourclark.com

REPORT OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:

Councilwoman Hoff:

Library Report: see attached

- Reported participation as a full member of the Library Board and noted increased awareness of library programs and initiatives
- Announced the Clark Public Library's upcoming 60th anniversary celebration, with multiple events planned throughout the year
- Noted additional programming related to the 250th anniversary of the United States, including themed events and presentations
- Reported library usage statistics for December:
 - 7,189 in-person visitors
 - Over 5,500 website and video visits
- Announced upcoming library events:
 - New Jersey Revolutionary Rivalry program scheduled for February 3
 - Friends of the Library jewelry, book, and puzzle sale scheduled for February 7
 - "Unique Creatures" / Take Your Child to the Library Day scheduled for February 22

Councilman Hund:

Police Report: see attached

- Reported a total of 1,723 calls for service
- Noted that 654 calls were received via 911
- Calls for service included:

- 153 ambulance requests
- 69 alarm calls
- 1 mental health-related call
- 0 attempted burglary calls
- 30 fire department requests
- 6 fraud/identity theft reports
- 3 motor vehicle and residential lockouts
- 65 motor vehicle accidents
- 22 shoplifting and theft incidents
- Reported a total of 23 adult arrests, including:
 - 8 warrant-related arrests
 - 10 shoplifting-related arrests
- Reported Youth Aid Bureau activity totaling 5 cases, including:
 - 1 simple assault case
 - 3 shoplifting cases
 - 1 other juvenile-related case

Councilman Mazzarella:

DPW Report: see attached

- Announced that branch and leaf pickup for the 2025 season is complete
- Advised residents not to place branches or leaves at the curb, as DPW will not collect them
- Noted that electronic drop-off will resume on January 31 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the DPW facility located behind the Police Department; please bring valid identification
- Reported that Christmas tree pickup began on January 5 and will conclude on January 26 and instructed residents to remove all decorations, tree stands, and plastic bags from trees prior to pickup
- Reminded residents to remove basketball and soccer nets from the roadway in accordance with Township ordinance and by removing the nets helps prevent equipment damage, improves road safety, and allows for proper street sweeping and snow plowing
- Provided DPW contact information for additional questions: dpw@ourclark.com

Councilman O'Connor:

Finance Report:

Emergency Squad Report: see attached

- Reported that the Township continues to meet all current financial obligations
- Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad participated in various Township events such as Holiday Lights event, coverage at football games, Holiday tree display in Town Hall
- Installation of 2026 officers held on December 7, with Mayor Albanese swearing in officers
- Presented length of service awards, appreciation awards, and life-saving awards
- Call volume and hours:
 - November: 139 calls, 4 mutual aid calls; approximately 917 man-hours responding to calls

- December: 128 calls, 2 mutual aid calls; approximately 832 man-hours responding to calls
- Total for 2025: 1,439 calls; approximately 9,498 man-hours responding to calls (volunteer hours on duty not included)
- All cadet positions filled, maintaining a waiting list and accepting applications for individuals 18 years and older
- Offers free CPR, driving, and EMT training
- Hosted 5 blood drives in November and December
- Contact and membership information: www.ourclark.com or membership@clarkems.org

Councilman Toal:

Environmental Commission:

- Environmental Commission Chair Marc Hayden reminded residents that the first full meeting of 2026 will be held on Wednesday, January 21
- Meeting will include a discussion of the Commission's agenda for the 2026 calendar year
- Noted that the annual Rahway River cleanup is normally conducted in April, coordinated by Joe Seabode, who tracks volunteer hours for the northern portion of Clark
- Fall cleanup of the reservoir will also be conducted as part of the Commission's activities
- Residents are invited to attend the meeting in Room 30, History Room at Brewer, to discuss initiatives for a cleaner and greener Clark
- Meeting report will be made available in the Clerk's office for those unable to attend

Councilman Smith:

Recreation and Pool Report: see attached

- Reported the Annual Family Skate Night at Warinanco Park on Saturday, January 17, with over 150 residents attending
- Noted upcoming "Devil's Night" event on Thursday, January 29, at the Prudential Center in Newark; over 100 tickets sold to date
- Provided update on Rec basketball and indoor soccer programs, noting over 500 children registered and programs currently underway
- Announced that all winter Rec programs are in full swing, with spring programs and events scheduled to be released in late February
- Contact information for program inquiries: Ralph Bernardo or Emily Lambert, Recreation Department, 732-428-8400

ORDINANCES, APPROPRIATIONS AND CLAIMS:

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS:

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

Ordinance 26-01

AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE TO FIX MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES

Council President Smith opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 26-01

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

Council President Smith directed roll call:

Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Toal, Smith

Discussion:

Albert Cruz, Township Attorney:

- Noted that Ordinance 26-01 was introduced on January 5, 2026
- Determined that material changes were necessary:
 - Addition of the position of Senior Custodial Worker
 - Revision of the minimum hourly rate for hourly workers to align with state law
- Reported that the public hearing on Ordinance 26-01 was concluded
- Administration recommended that Council introduce the proposed amended Ordinance 26-01, including the revisions
- Procedural steps outlined:
 - Motion to introduce Ordinance 26-01 as amended
 - Second the motion
 - Discussion regarding the amendment
 - Clerk to issue notice of introduction
 - Public hearing on the amended ordinance scheduled for February 2, 2026
- Similar procedural recommendation noted for Ordinance 26-03, with details to be addressed by the Administrator

INTRODUCTION of Amended Ordinance 26-01

AN ORDINANCE CREATING THE POSITION OF SENIOR CUSTODIAL WORKER 03289@ AND AMENDING THE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES

WHEREAS, the Township has discontinued contracting with third-party business organizations to provide custodial services and employs its own custodian or custodians; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 25-08, adopted March 17, 2025, created the position “Custodial Worker”; and

WHEREAS, the Township also must create the position “Senior Custodial Worker”; and

WHEREAS, the Township also must provide for compensation for such “Senior Custodial Worker” designation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Clark, Union County, New Jersey, that the position of “Senior Custodial Worker,” who shall be part of the white collar union, and who shall render custodial services within the Municipal Building, the Police Department and Municipal Court, and such other buildings and structures of or owned by the Township, as is directed by the Business Administrator in his or her discretion, be and hereby is created; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark that the proper officer or officers of the Township of Clark be and they are hereby authorized and directed to execute and deliver checks on Township funds for the purpose of paying the salaries to the employees of the Township of Clark within the range as set forth below opposite each job classification as in such cases made. The following supplements the Schedule of salaries effective as of January 1, 2026, and may be amended for those who may exceed the maximum.

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Business Administrator	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 220,000.00
Township Clerk	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 160,000.00
Deputy Township Clerk	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 130,000.00
Township Attorney*		
Mayor’s Confidential Secretary	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Confidential Assistant/H.R./Affirmative Action	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
Assessor P/T	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
Tax Collector	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
Assistant Treasurer	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Certified Finance Officer/Treasurer	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Construction Code Official	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 175,000.00
Technical Assistant to the Construction Official	\$ 45,800.00	\$ 90,000.00
Municipal Court Administrator	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 120,000.00
Deputy Court Administrator	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
Health Officer	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Assistant to Health Officer	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Supervisor of Public Works	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 150,000.00
Public Works Assistant Supervisor	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Laborer 1	\$ 42,900.00	\$ 55,000.00
Public Works Repairer	\$ 53,000.00	\$ 67,000.00
Laborer 2	\$ 42,900.00	\$ 60,000.00
Senior Public Works Repairer	\$ 66,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
Mechanic 1	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
Bus Driver – Full Time	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Bus Driver – Part Time	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Mayor	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Council President	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 15,000.00

Council Members	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Board of Adjustment Secretary	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Planning Board Secretary	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Fire Prevention Official	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Deputy Fire Prevention Official	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Director Public Safety	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 3,500.00
Director Senior Citizen	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 7,500.00
Director Public Works/Shade Tree	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 20,000.00
Fire Sub Code Official P/T	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Elevator Inspector P/T	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Plumbing Sub Code Official P/T	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Electrical Inspector P/T	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Emergency Management Coordinator	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Deputy Emergency Management	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Fire Prevention – IT P/T	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 10,000.00
Fire Official Secretary	\$ 750.00	\$ 1,000.00
Fire Chief	\$ 3,800.00	\$ 20,000.00
Battalion Chief	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 6,000.00
Deputy Chief #1	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 6,000.00
Deputy Chief #2	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 5,500.00
Deputy Chief #3	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 5,500.00
1 st Fire Captain	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 4,500.00
2 nd Fire Captain	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 4,500.00
3 rd Fire Captain	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 4,500.00
4 th Fire Captain	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 4,500.00
Public Information Officer	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,500.00
Fire Lieutenants	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
Prosecutor P/T	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 35,000.00
Judge	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
Public Defender P/T	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Director of Recreation/Facilities Mgr.	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 150,000.00
Assistant Recreation Supervisor	\$ 9,200.00	\$ 40,000.00
Director Teen Center	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Assistant Teen Center	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Recreation/Senior Fitness P/T Personnel	\$ 500.00	\$ 25,000.00
Manager – TV 36	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
Fire Training Officer	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Property Maintenance P/T	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Custodial Worker	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 69,000.00
Senior Custodial Worker	\$ 52,500.00	\$ 80,000.00
Building Maintenance Worker	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 69,000.00
Sr. Building Maintenance Worker	\$ 59,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Administrative Clerk	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 85,000.00
Accounting Clerk	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 55,000.00
Sr. Accounting Clerk	\$ 45,800.00	\$ 60,000.00
Principal Accounting Clerk	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 90,000.00

Clerk 1	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 69,000.00
Clerk 2	\$ 45,800.00	\$ 79,000.00
Clerk 3	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 89,000.00
Keyboarding Clerk 1	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 69,000.00
Keyboarding Clerk 2	\$ 45,800.00	\$ 79,000.00
Keyboarding Clerk 3	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 89,000.00
Records Support Technician 1	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 59,000.00
Records Support Technician 2	\$ 45,800.00	\$ 69,000.00
Records Support Technician 3	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 87,000.00
Technical Assistant	\$ 45,800.00	\$ 69,000.00
Sr. Technical Assistant	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 87,000.00
Personnel Aide	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
Personnel Assistant	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 90,000.00
Sr. Personnel Assistant	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
Information Technology Assistant	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
Supervisor Information Technology	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
Assistant Director of Information Technology	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
QPA	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Municipal Certified Recycling Coordinator	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Technical Assistant Certification	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 10,000.00

HOURLY

Police Matron – on duty	\$ 60.00 Event	\$ 60.00 event
Matron on duty	\$ 40.00 Flat Rate	
Police Matron – on call	\$ 60.00 hour	\$ 60.00 hour
Matron call-in	\$ 40.00 hour	2 hr. minimum
Seasonal Employees – Recreation/Sr. Citizen	\$ 15.23 hour	\$ 30.00 hour
Building Maintenance	\$ 15.92 hour	\$ 30.00 hour
Clerk Typist	\$ 15.92 hour	\$ 30.00 hour
Inspectors	\$ 15.92 hour	\$ 45.00 hour
Bus Driver	\$ 15.92 hour	\$ 30.00 hour
General Part-Time Help	\$ 15.92 hour	\$ 30.00 hour

POLICE – Base Pay

Police Director	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 225,000.00
**Chief (plus longevity and education)	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
**Captains (plus longevity and education)	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 200,000.00

MUNICIPAL POOL

	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Pool Director	\$ 8,450.00	\$ 20,000.00
Pool Facilities Manager	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Assistant Manager(s)	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 10,000.00
Water Safety Instructor(s)	\$ 3,300.00	\$ 10,000.00
Lifeguard(s) – Seasonal	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 10,000.00
Maintenance Worker(s) – Seasonal	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 10,000.00

Gate Control Person(s) – Seasonal	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Activities Director – Seasonal	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 5,000.00

*Annual Professional Services Contract

**Contract(s) for each position is 10% above lower position plus longevity and education.

Any ordinance inconsistent with the provisions contained herein is hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon final passage and publication according to law.

Moved to introduce the Amended ordinance by Councilman Toal and seconded by Councilman Hund

Council President Smith directed roll call:
Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Toal, Smith

The public hearing will be on February 2

Ordinance 26-02

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT AND CREATING THE POSITIONS OF PERSONNEL AIDE (02645), PERSONNEL ASSISTANT (02648), AND SENIOR PERSONNEL ASSISTANT (04982)

Council President Smith opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 26-02

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

Council President Smith directed roll call:
Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Toal, Smith

Motion to adopt Ordinance 26-02 was made by Councilman Hund, seconded by Councilman Mazzarella

Discussion:

James Ulrich, Business Administrator:

- It’s self-explanatory

Council President Smith directed roll call:
Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Toal, Smith

Ordinance Adopted

Ordinance 26-03

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 Smith opened the Public Hearing on Ordinance 26-03

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

Council President Smith directed roll call:

Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Toal, Smith

Discussion:

James Ulrich, Business Administrator:

- Noted that Ordinance 26-03 requires changes similar to those made for Ordinance 26-01
- Changes are related to cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) calculations in accordance with state requirements
- Administration recommended moving forward with Ordinance 26-03 as amended with a public hearing scheduled for February 17, 2026
- Updates are procedural and do not alter the method of calculating COLA, only align with current state requirements

INTRODUCTION of Amended Ordinance 26-03

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

WHEREAS the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S. 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget to 2.0% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year’s final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and

WHEREAS N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and

WHEREAS the Governing Body of the Township of Clark in the County of Union finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2026 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year’s final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and

WHEREAS the Governing Body hereby determines that a 1.5% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$352,706.24 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and

WHEREAS the Governing Body hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, in the County of Union, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that in the CY 2026 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of Clark shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$822,981.22 and that the CY 2026 municipal budget for the Township of Clark be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

Moved to introduce the Amended ordinance by Councilman Mazzarella and seconded by Councilman O'Connor

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

The public hearing will be on February 17

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES:

Ordinance 26-04

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE USE OF TOWNSHIP OF CLARK OWNED FUEL DISPENSING FACILITIES BY THE CLARK VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SQUAD, INC.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Clark, County of Union, State of New Jersey as follows:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

The Township Council finds that the Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad, Inc. ("Emergency Squad") provides essential emergency medical services to the residents and visitors of the Township of Clark. The Council further finds that supporting the operational readiness of the

Emergency Squad serves a valid public purpose and promotes the health, safety and welfare of the community. The Township Council further finds that N.J.S.A. 40:5-2 authorizes the Township to contribute “equipment and supplies for use by” the Emergency Squad, and its successors, assigns or reorganized squad performing the same public purpose, provided that the Township controls and disburses the fuel.

SECTION 2. AUTHORIZATION TO USE TOWNSHIP OWNED FUEL DISPENSING FACILITIES

The Emergency Squad is hereby authorized access to the Township owned fuel dispensing facilities for the purpose of fueling vehicles owned leased or operated by the Emergency Squad that are used in the performance of official emergency medical services, training readiness and related public safety operations.

SECTION 3. COST AND FUEL LIMITATIONS

Fuel provided pursuant to this Ordinance shall be provided at no charge to the Emergency Squad. There shall be no limitation on the quantity of fuel dispensed provided that such fuel is used solely for authorized emergency squad vehicles and for official purposes.

SECTION 4. ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS

Access to the Township fuel dispensing facilities shall be subject to administrative rules procedures and controls established by the Township Administrator or designee including authorization of vehicle access credentials, recordkeeping and compliance monitoring.

SECTION 5. RESTRICTIONS ON USE

Fuel obtained pursuant to this Ordinance shall not be used for personal vehicles or for any non-official or non-emergency related purpose. Any misuse of the fuel may result in suspension or revocation of access as determined by the Township Administrator subject to the Township Administrator providing the Emergency Squad five (5) days termination notice.

SECTION 6. LIABILITY AND INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent permitted by law, the Emergency Squad shall be responsible for the actions of its members and the operation of its vehicles and shall indemnify and hold harmless the Township, its officers, employees and agents, from claims arising out of the use of the Township fuel facilities except where caused by the Township’s sole negligence.

SECTION 7. SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, paragraph or provision of this Ordinance is declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall take effect upon final passage and publication as required by law.

Moved by Councilwoman Hoff and seconded by Councilman Hund

Discussion:**James Ulrich, Business Administrator:**

- An ordinance to formally allow the Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad to use township gas and diesel pumps at no charge
- Noted that this is a precautionary measure to document the policy and avoid potential disputes, similar to issues experienced in other municipalities
- Confirmed there are no anticipated issues; the ordinance is intended solely to memorialize existing practice

Council President Smith directed roll call:

Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Toal, Smith

The public hearing will be on February 2

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS:

Councilman O'Connor, Chairman of Finance Committee has reviewed the Current and Capital expenditures received and encumbered through January 14, 2026 in the amount \$766,336.40

CITIZEN HEARING ON THE AGENDA:

Summary (Council Meeting can be viewed on our website www.ourclark.com or on TV 36)

The public comment portion of the meeting is to allow the public to bring to the Council's attention their concerns or comments. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(a) and the Code of the Township of Clark, each person addressing the Council shall give their name and the town in which they reside, to the Clerk. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and shall not exceed 5 minutes in duration. At the conclusion of the statements or questions from a member of the public, the Council President, at his discretion, may choose to respond or not respond.

Council President Smith opened the Citizen Hearing on the Agenda

Michael Shulman, Clark resident:

- Questioned Consent Agenda Resolution #12, which authorizes the award of a non-fair and open contract for the appointment of a public relations and communications firm, noting the resolution does not specify the purpose of the contract
- Administration responded that the PR firm will provide strategic guidance and support in communications related to a recent legal matter involving the Township, including:
 - Drafting and managing press releases
 - Ensuring accurate messaging and minimizing miscommunication
 - Addressing concerns related to individuals named in the lawsuit
 - Firm will be available for use as needed to assist administration and communications staff
- Expressed concerns regarding the historical context of the lawsuit and the timing of the engagement, noting perceived systemic issues within the police department and prior administration

- Discussion included differing perspectives on the necessity, scope, and timing of the PR contract

CONSENT AGENDA:

The following items are considered routine and non-controversial items by the Township Council and will be enacted upon by one motion. There will be no separate vote on these items unless a Council Member so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda to be discussed and voted on, following the approval of the remaining items listed on the Consent Agenda

Resolution 26-49

BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, County of Union, State of New Jersey that it does hereby authorize the Mayor and/or Business Administrator to execute an Addendum to the Department of Public Works Agreement between Clark Township and Union Council No. 8, I.F.P.T.E., AFL-CIO Representing Blue Collar Employees effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2027, restricting vacation leave during the period of November 1 through November 30 to ensure adequate staffing for critical operational demands.

Resolution 26-50

WHEREAS Montana Construction Corp. Inc. has completed post storm damage work at various locations for the project entitled Pumpkin Patch Stream Cleaning and Outfall Repair and has requested Payment #1; and

WHEREAS the Township Engineer recommends payment in the sum of Seven Hundred Fifty-Seven Thousand, Eight Hundred Ninety-Five Dollars and Seven Cents (\$757,895.07) including change order #1 for sediment removal in the amount of \$7,745.28, change order #2 for trucking in the amount of \$12,871.44 and change order #3 for fallen tree removal in the amount of \$4,945.60 which increases the adjusted contract amount by Twenty-Five Thousand, Five Hundred Sixty-Two Dollars and Thirty-Two Cents (\$25,562.32); and

WHEREAS the Chief Financial Officer has ascertained there are available sufficient uncommitted appropriations in Account #C-04-25-033-001 as attached hereto as a “Certification of Availability of Funds”; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, County of Union, New Jersey that it does hereby authorize Payment #1, including change orders #1, 2 and 3 to Montana Construction Corp. Inc., 80 Contant Avenue, Lodi, New Jersey 07644 in the amount of \$757,895.07.

Resolution 26-51

RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 26-39 TO CORRECT THE NAME OF THE CONTRACTOR AWARDED A CONTRACT FOR QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT SERVICES

WHEREAS, on January 5, 2026, the Governing Body of the Township of Clark adopted Resolution No. 26-39 awarding Holman, Fenwick, Allotti (HFA) CPA’s a non-fair and open contract for Qualified Purchasing Agent services in accordance with the Local Public Contracts Law; and

WHEREAS, the name of HFA was incorrectly stated in Resolution No. 26-39 as Holman, Fenwick, Allotti and requires amendment to accurately reflect the action taken by the Governing Body and the name of the contractor; and

WHEREAS, the amendment is administrative and does not alter the terms, conditions, or award of the contract awarded by Resolution No. 26-39; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body finds it appropriate to amend Resolution No. 26-39 to correct the name of the contractor as described above for clarity and to maintain accurate public records.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, County of Union, State of New Jersey, that the heading of Resolution No. 26-39, adopted on January 5, 2026, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract to Holman, Frenia, Allison, PC (HFA) CPA’s for Qualified Purchasing Agent Services.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the text of Resolution 26-39 is amended to change the name of the contractor as described above.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all other terms and provisions of Resolution No. 26-39 shall remain in full force and effect.

Resolution 26-52

RESOLUTION TO FILE TAX APPEALS AND ROLLBACKS

WHEREAS the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, County of Union, State of New Jersey, has been informed by the Municipal Tax Assessor of the Township of Clark that from time to time, the Assessor may be required to execute stipulations relative to assessment appeals, to make corrections in assessments on properties located in the Township of Clark, and file omitted assessments and rollback tax complaints and appeals, all in the name of the Township of Clark; and

WHEREAS the Union County Board of Taxation requires a resolution of the Governing Body to authorize such actions by the Assessor; and

WHEREAS the Governing Body desires to grant such authority to the Assessor, subject to the conditions set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, in the County of Union, and State of New Jersey as follows:

- 1. The Municipal Assessor of the Township of Clark be, and hereby is authorized, in the name of the Township of Clark aforesaid, to:
 - a. Execute stipulations related to assessment appeals;
 - b. Make corrections on assessments on properties located in the Township of Clark;
 - c. File omitted assessments and roll-back tax complaints and appeals with Union County Board of Taxation.
- 2. The authority herein granted shall expire on December 31, 2026, and it is conditioned upon the Municipal Assessor advising the Township Attorney or the Governing Body of all such actions taken by him and the reasons therefore.
- 3. A copy of this resolution duly certified to be a copy, thereof shall be transmitted to the Municipal Assess and the Union County Board of Taxation.

Resolution 26-53

BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark, County of Union, New Jersey that it hereby authorizes and ratifies the action taken by the Health Officer to enter into an agreement between the Township of Clark and Atlantic Health System (AHS), Atlantic Corporate Health for the period ending December 31, 2026 to provide health education services by a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) at \$65.00 per hour up to 225 hours in an amount not to exceed \$14,625.00, any hours beyond the 225 hours per year will be billed at \$70.00 per hour, mileage reimbursement for the Certified Health Education Specialist to be assessed monthly at \$0.67 per mile, funded by the New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials (NJACCHO) Grant and pending the approval of the 2026 Municipal Budget.

Resolution 26-54

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2024, by Resolution No. 24-63, the Governing Body of the Township of Clark awarded Aquatic Service Inc., (the "Vendor") a contract for Pool Maintenance Services at the Clark Municipal Swim Pool for the 2024 pool season through a formal bidding process under the Local Public Contracts Law; and

WHEREAS, on February 18, 2025, by Resolution No. 25-67, the Governing Body of the Township of Clark extended the contract with the Vendor for one (1) additional year; and

WHEREAS, the Vendor submitted a written request to be considered for an additional one (1) year extension of the contract for 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Vendor agreed to a price of Thirty-Seven Thousand, Six Hundred Ninety-Seven Dollars and Twenty Cents (\$37,697.20) for 2026 and agreed to comply with all the terms and conditions as set forth in the aforesaid specifications; and

WHEREAS, the contract may be expressly extended in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-15 and Section 12 of Part B, entitled "Award of Contract", of the bid specifications at the sole option of the Township; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-15(a), the Governing Body of the Township of Clark finds that the pool maintenance services provided by Aquatic Service Inc. have been performed in an effective and efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, the original contract was awarded for the 2024 pool season and was extended for the 2025 pool season, and the proposed one (1) year extension for the 2026 pool season will not cause the contract to run for more than a total of five (5) consecutive years, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-15(b); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-15(c), the contract price for the 2026 extension is based upon the price of the original contract as cumulatively adjusted pursuant to the prior extension and represents an increase of approximately three percent (3.0%) over the 2025 contract amount, which increase does not exceed the change in the applicable Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), as published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the twelve (12) months preceding the most recent quarterly calculation available at the time the contract is renewed; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-15(d), the terms and conditions of the contract remain substantially the same;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Township of Clark in its capacity as the Pool Utility that it hereby awards an additional one-year contract to Aquatic Service Inc. and authorizes and directs the Mayor to execute said contract.

Resolution 26-55

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FIRM

WHEREAS, the Township of Clark has a need for public relations and communications services, which constitute professional services as defined by N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a)(i), and may be awarded without public advertising for bids as a non-fair and open contract in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, Mercury LLC located at 200 Varick Street, Suite 600, New York, NY 10014, has submitted a proposal dated January 15, 2026, indicating it will provide services as a Public Relations and Communications Firm in connection with Township related matters for the fee of \$175.00 per hour, in an amount not to exceed \$30,000.00; and

WHEREAS, the anticipated term of this contract shall not exceed one (1) year from the date of the award; and

WHEREAS, the Qualified Purchasing Agent has determined and certified in writing that the anticipated value of the contract to be awarded exceeds \$17,500, thereby requiring compliance with the provisions of the New Jersey Local Unit Pay-to-Play Law, N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, Mercury LLC has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which certifies that Mercury LLC has not made any reportable contributions to any political or candidate committee for any members of the Governing Body of the Township of Clark during the previous one (1) year; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer certifies, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-5.4, that there are adequate funds for this contract not to exceed \$30,000.00. Funds have been certified to be available in account number 20-101-201 Communications; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Clark, in the County of Union, State of New Jersey, that it hereby authorizes the Business Administrator to enter into a contract with Mercury LLC, as described herein; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all required documents, certifications, and disclosures related to this contract shall be maintained on file in the Office of the Township Clerk, as required by law.

Motion to adopt Consent Agenda Resolutions 26-49 thru 25-55 was made by Councilman Toal, seconded by Councilman Mazzarella

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

Resolutions Adopted

RESOLUTIONS: None

NEW BUSINESS ON THE CALENDAR: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:**Summary (Council Meeting can be viewed on our website www.ourclark.com or on TV 36)**

The public comment portion of the meeting is to allow the public to bring to the Council's attention their concerns or comments. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(a) and the Code of the Township of Clark, each person addressing the Council shall give their name and the town in which they reside, to the Clerk. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and shall not exceed 5 minutes in duration. At the conclusion of the statements or questions from a member of the public, the Council President, at his discretion, may choose to respond or not respond.

Council President Smith opened the public portion of the meeting

Dan Fuchs, Clark resident:

- Stated that the speaker has raised concerns to the governing body for several years without receiving a response
- Expressed frustration that ongoing issues continue to affect the Town due to a lack of public action or statements by leadership
- Urged Town leadership to clearly separate the Town from allegations related to prior conduct in order to move forward
- Criticized the Mayor's emailed statement for referencing certain police officers but not addressing former Mayor Sal Bonaccorso
- Stated that former Mayor Bonaccorso continues to negatively impact the Town's reputation
- Called for the Town to separate itself from former leadership and matters that occurred under that administration
- Requested that any remaining police personnel named in the current complaint be removed
- Expressed concern that Town officials have not spoken forcefully enough on the issue
- Called for the Town to clearly distinguish past racism from what the Town aspires to be
- Noted repeated frustration at having the same discussion over multiple years
- Encouraged the Council to issue a stronger public statement
- Referenced officers who lost their court case and urged that appropriate personnel actions be taken
- Called for more aggressive action, including "cleaning house" and speaking publicly about moving beyond past issues
- Expressed concern that the Town's reputation continues to suffer due to perceived inaction

Michael Shulman, Clark resident:

- Stated that the current complaint is not a repetition of prior allegations that resulted in criminal convictions against former Mayor Sal Bonaccorso
- Asserted that the complaint addresses actions taken by the Town after the conclusion of oversight by the Union County Prosecutor's Office and the Attorney General's Office

- Stated that the complaint includes allegations involving current Police Director Patrick Grady
- Referenced allegations that, as a Captain, Police Director Grady used derogatory and racially offensive language and failed to properly address internal affairs complaints
- Referenced allegations describing a close relationship between Police Director Grady and former Mayor Bonaccorso
- Recounted allegations from the complaint describing inappropriate statements and conduct at a police union meeting, as reported by multiple former officers
- Expressed concern that continued inaction signals tolerance of racism and bigotry
- Noted concern regarding racist and hateful comments within the community
- Called for completion of disciplinary hearings following the conclusion of related court proceedings
- Urged the governing body to take action, change the public narrative, and demonstrate progress
- Acknowledged that some may view the matter as politically motivated but stated that dismissing it has led to continued scrutiny

Leanne Llandros, Clark resident:

- Identified herself as a lifelong Clark resident, ALJ graduate, registered Democrat, and political centrist
- Stated that she considers her views representative of an average resident
- Expressed appreciation for many aspects of the town, including schools, public safety departments, and recreation programs
- Stated that despite these strengths, it can be embarrassing to live in the town due to unresolved issues that are widely known but insufficiently addressed
- Asserted that racism in the community is often implicit rather than overt, and reflected in institutional practices and tolerated behavior
- Stated that former Mayor Sal Bonaccorso served the Town well for many years but should not have continued in office beyond his time
- Expressed support for Mayor Angel Albanese and confidence in current leadership's ability to improve the situation
- Urged the governing body to stop characterizing allegations as political maneuvering and instead publicly condemn the alleged conduct as unacceptable
- Encouraged the town to proceed with disciplinary hearings and remove individuals who should no longer remain in their positions
- Suggested that addressing racism should begin with children through education and cultural awareness
- Reported concerns about racial slurs and derogatory language used by students, which she attributed to influences outside the school environment and at home
- Stated that the school district does not currently provide cultural awareness or recognition of heritage months
- Recounted a failed student initiative to create a cultural awareness club due to administrative delays
- Suggested that promoting cultural awareness in schools would be a more effective and less costly approach than hiring a public relations firm

Motion to close this portion of the meeting made by Councilwoman Hoff, seconded by Councilman O'Connor

Council President Smith directed roll call:

Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Toal, Smith

MAYOR, COUNCIL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMENTS:

Mayor Albanese:

- Stated that the township's response to the recently received complaint was prepared rapidly
- We will continue to proceed as previously outlined earlier in the meeting
- Noted that any new developments or information will be reported when available
- Clarified that changes to time off dates are related to leaf pickup and were mutually agreed upon with the union
- Stated that leaf pickup will occur first, followed by branch pickup

Councilwoman Hoff:

- Congratulated Ralph Bernardo and praised his recognition and contributions to the community
- Expressed appreciation for local schools, student athletics, public works, and emergency services, particularly following recent storms
- Thanked the Mayor and administration for their efforts to address negative public attention and for pursuing transparency
- Spoke in support of the township's decision to retain a public relations firm to assist with communications during ongoing litigation
- Stated that the township contains many good people and that negative media coverage focuses disproportionately on past events
- Expressed concern about the continued public sharing of negative content about the township on social media and national platforms
- Acknowledged limitations on what the administration can publicly state due to active litigation
- Expressed support for the Mayor's opening remarks and subsequent public statements
- Encouraged residents to highlight positive aspects of the township and community achievements
- Urged the community to move forward in a more positive direction

Councilman Hund:

- Congratulated Ralph Bernardo on his award and recognized his contributions to the township
- Congratulated the Mother Seton volleyball team on their state championship and noted pride in local school achievements
- Thanked the Mayor for her earlier statement regarding the new civil suit
- Stated that the PR firm is intended to educate and improve the township's image beyond residents

- Emphasized the importance of starting with children to address implicit racism and improve community culture
- Noted that the township is not wholly racist and stressed efforts to show improvement to the wider public
- Provided a safety reminder regarding an upcoming large storm

Councilman Mazzarella:

- Congratulated Ralph Bernardo and the Mother Seton girls' volleyball team on their accomplishments
- Expressed support for the Mayor and administration's decision to retain a PR firm to ensure transparent communication with residents
- Highlighted the township's growth into a caring, family-oriented community and appreciation for neighbors coming together
- Criticized focus on negative commentary and emphasized recognition of the township's positive contributions
- Praised DPW staff for their work on road cleanups and reminded residents to follow ordinances regarding vehicle removal during upcoming snowstorms

Councilman O'Connor:

- Agreed with Councilwoman's Hoff's points on focusing on positivity and moving forward as a community
- Stated that the Mayor and administration are taking correct steps, and the PR firm helps prevent miscommunication and misinterpretation
- Noted that the Mayor and Business Administrator have full workloads, and the PR firm assists in handling communications efficiently
- Emphasized that the Town is actively moving forward and improving, despite criticism from some community members
- Congratulated Ralph Bernardo and the Mother Seton girls' volleyball team
- Provided an overview of the new New Jersey ebike legislation (S4834/A6235), including age, licensing, registration, insurance, helmet requirements, and sidewalk restrictions.
- Urged residents to review and follow the new ebike rules for safety and compliance

Councilman Toal:

- Congratulated Ralph Bernardo for his contributions to the community and acknowledged his positive impact on local youth
- Praised the Mother Seton girls' volleyball team for their accomplishments, noting the school as a valuable part of the community
- Defended Police Director Patrick Grady, emphasizing personal knowledge of him and support for his character and service
- Stated that legal processes and regulations must guide actions related to ongoing issues
- Recognized Joan Laezza for her contributions and support behind the dedication of the courtroom building, expressing condolences for her passing
- Emphasized pride in Clark as a community, encouraging open communication, working through issues, and striving to improve the township as a whole

Councilman Smith:

- Clark Travel Basketball Tournament: Hosting across Brewer Rec Center, ALJ High School, and Kompf Middle School
- Over 210 teams will be participating from New Jersey and Staten Island
- Tournament is positive for local businesses; next update will be provided at the following council meeting

James Ulrich, Business Administrator:

- Stressed that resolving the allegations is a long-term process; noted past issues with Attorney General investigations in other municipalities
- Highlighted that the Union County Prosecutor’s Office, during its 3.5-year tenure, found no evidence of bias, misconduct, or unprofessional behavior by Clark Police Department officers, and that documentation for minority/female applicants was appropriate
- Pointed out inconsistencies between the Department of Civil Rights (DCR) report and findings from the Union County Prosecutor’s Office and the current Attorney General’s office
- Emphasized the importance of professional legal and administrative processes, and cautioned against taking anonymous complaints at face value
- Addressed administrative matters: limited DPW space for branch storage, recycling tonnage reporting requirements for businesses, business registration and insurance compliance, and backflow preventer inspections for water safety
- Encouraged residents and businesses to reach out with questions for clarification

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Toal, seconded by Councilman O’Connor

Council President Smith directed roll call:

Aye: Hoff, Hund, Mazzarella, O’Connor, Toal, Smith

APPROVED



 WILLIAM F. SMITH
 Council President

ATTEST:



 EDITH L. MERKEL, RMC
 Township Clerk