

# Council exec resigns in Marietta

BY STEPHANIE BRADFORD, Correspondent – Lancaster *Intelligencer Journal/New Era*,  
Wednesday, August 22, 2012

“Barbara Wison resigned her position as vice president of Marietta Borough Council on August 14.

“Reading from a letter, she first thanked the residents of the borough for allowing her to serve. But she added that she found it ‘almost impossible to find common ground’ with the other members of council -- in particular, the leadership.

“Her rift with council is, primarily, over the borough's recent decision to assume debt for \$668,591 in road construction, she said.

“Wilson said in a phone interview that she believes it is ‘morally wrong’ for the borough to borrow money when revenues are down, especially given the tax increase last year. The borough's tax rate rose from 4.5 mills in 2010 to 5.5 mills in 2011.

“The plan for one road, Fairview Avenue, is so contentious that eight residents sued the borough in May in county court. That legal action is pending.

“Council had voted unanimously on March 13 to move ahead with the Fairview Avenue project, according to meeting minutes on the borough's website.

“But Wilson was one of two council members who voted no in July when the board awarded a contract to Pennsy Supply for the Fairview Avenue work.

“Prior to Wilson's announcement on Aug. 14, council adjourned to executive session to discuss the ongoing litigation over the project.

“Wilson said she believes it is council's job to ‘serve, not dictate.’ She concluded by saying she had no other option but to ‘resign with great prejudice.’

“Wilson then moved to adjourn the meeting. After a minute of nearly complete silence, council member Jack Rice seconded the motion and President Miriam Fletcher brought the gavel down.

“After the meeting, when asked if he was surprised by the resignation, Rice said, ‘Nobody knew it.’

“Wilson has served on council for six years.

“Fletcher said after the meeting that there was a protocol concern because there was no formal vote to accept Wilson's resignation. Council only has 30 days from the date of the resignation to fill the vacancy.

“An email received Aug. 15 from Jody Shaffner, borough secretary, said, ‘Council appreciates Ms. Wilson's service, but she has made a personal decision that she cannot continue to serve effectively and we honor that decision.’

“The email states that it was sent on behalf of Fletcher.

“A second email from Shaffner said that ‘council will be accepting letters of interest from any resident interested in serving on borough council until Tuesday, Sept. 4.’

“Letters should be sent to 111 E. Market St., Marietta. Pa. 17547.”