

BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP/COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 with the following persons present: Council President Philip Wert; Council Vice President Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler and Jack Gombach; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Police Chief Stephen Powell; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Borough Manager Nicholas Imbesi; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

VISITORS:	Karen Livingood	Resident
	James Rogers	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Douglas Zeeger, Jr.	Resident
	Chad Moyer	Resident

CALL TO ORDER:

Council President Philip Wert called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

James Rogers inquired as to further discussions surrounding the Business Privilege Tax. Mr. Wert indicated that this would be discussed during the Saturday, September 28th budget meeting.

Mr. Rogers inquired as to an update on the Lofts at Narrow fire safety inspection. Mr. Imbesi stated that there is no update at this time, however he would be meeting with the Fire Marshal later this week.

Oswald Herbert noted a drone flying in the vicinity of Fourth and Penn Avenue's earlier today and the lack of oversight or notification to municipalities for this type of activity. Mr. Imbesi stated that he would review other potential municipal regulations, and the FAA's rules for flying a drone.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Chief Powell provided additional information he gathered to purchase a Jeep Cherokee for the Parking Enforcement Officer's use. The three-year lease payment options were discussed and decided that the annual payment option would be more desirable and provide a cost savings of \$500. Chief Powell stated the 4-6-week process to begin paperwork, accept delivery and make the first payment would take place during the 2019 budget. A review is needed of alternate available funds within the 2019 budget to cover this purchase and Council granted permission to begin the paperwork process.

Chief Powell noted a meeting with the paid parking lot owner to discuss concerns based on use of free parking spaces that are reserved for the shopping center business patrons. Enforcement of the free spaces, which are considered private parking, would require the owner to request enforcement. The owner expressed his desire to grant permission to the shopping center business owner to initiate these requests and if needed review video and testify in court situations. Chief Powell stated that a police officer would be onsite during the busy hours of 11:00 a.m. to Noon and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to educate drivers that park in free spaces and who do not visit the shopping center businesses.

Chief Powell noted that the K-9 switch did not take place because Falco attacked another handler and requested movement of funds from the Canine Grant to the Canine Program to cover the \$7,500 needed to train a new canine. Council granted permission to utilize \$2500 of the Education/Training line item 01-410-460 and \$5,000 from the Canine Grant line item 01-460-306 to cover these expenses.

Chief Powell stated that West Reading Tavern has indicated a potential need for police presence during their upcoming Pumpkin Festival due to the increased anticipated attendance of this two-day event. It was

suggested to review the Special Event Ordinance to require the event coordinator to provide police presence based on the anticipated crowd size. Also, a Life Chain event has requested two-hours of police presence during their demonstration scheduled on October 6th. It was suggested to review the definition of Special Event to determine if the submission of a special event application would be required.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Dean Murray provided additional information as to the savings from the recent paving projects and the amount being contributed by the Borough of Wyomissing for their 11% portion of Lakeview Drive, which totals \$67,757.20. Mr. Murray recommended utilizing this amount to cover the recent expense to fill a sinkhole with flowable fill along Pine Street, totaling \$1,700; a replacement heat/air-conditioning unit for the Police Department, totaling \$13,508; and the purchase of a replacement generator for Borough Hall. Due to the cost to replace the generator three quotes are needed, thus far a single Costars Contractor quote has been received totaling \$21,378 to build the generator, install a concrete pad and lift the unit into place near the handicapped ramp outside of the Police Department. The lead-time needed to build the generator unit is 11 to 14 weeks and it was suggested to review costs to rent a unit until the new unit is installed. The total funds needed to cover these three elements are \$36,586 and Mr. Murray requested permission to proceed once the two additional quotes are received for the generator. Council granted permission to proceed with the purchase of a replacement generator that would not exceed \$21,378.

Chief Powell and Mr. Murray departed the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

RFP – TRASH/RECYCLING:

Mr. Imbesi noted his review of elements needed within the request for proposal for trash and recycling collection and the minimized list of acceptable recycling materials. A draft proposal will be provided to Council for further review and discussion during the Saturday budget meeting. Yard waste collection will be included in the request to review the costs to offer this service.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET:

Chief Burkholder reviewed the fire company expenses and noted the following:

- Salaries would increase by 3% totaling \$7,658.
- Administrative expenses would remain at \$4,500.
- Debt service for payment of the firehouse remains at \$12,141. This debt would be paid off in October of 2026.
- General expense items would remain at \$10,000.
- County dispatch fees have not yet been determined and are listed at \$19,500 similar to 2019's budget.
- The annual cost of \$21,524 to fund fire company radios ends in 2019. Chief Burkholder noted that issues are beginning to be experienced with the radios now that the warranty has expired.
- Vehicle maintenance and repair would remain at \$27,000 to maintain the 20 plus year old vehicles.
- Gasoline is budgeted to remain at \$7,000.
- Vehicle insurance is estimated at \$6,832 due to a high claim during 2019.
- Workman's compensation expenses have been decreased by the state and are budgeted at \$17,000.
- Utility expenses were lowered to \$20,000 since gas and electric rates have been lower.
- Building maintenance and repair expenses were increased to \$24,000 due to issues being experienced with the garage doors and air-conditioning units. New wheels and brackets will be installed and the garage bay doors rehung at a cost of \$4,000.
- Minor equipment purchases to replace fans, flares, etc. is budgeted to remain at \$7,500.

- Capital expense has been increased to \$60,000 to purchase the annual replacement turn out gear and purchase a crew cab pickup truck. The smaller truck would be passed onto the fire police, which is better suited for their use. The new purchase would include painting and lights totaling \$50,000. Last month seven volunteer applications were received, which would require additional turn out gear.
- Chief Burkholder provided additional documented information and gave an overview of the increased volume of calls received to assist with medical calls. A proposal to provide funding of volunteer staffing during daytime hours, similar to that of Shillington Borough, where volunteers would sign up for a Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. shift and an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. shift. These staff members would be trained as firefighters and drivers of the apparatus. Part-time volunteer staff members would not be employees of the Borough; however, the Borough would provide funds for the hours of service to the fire company who would reimburse the staffers for their time. Chad Moyer stated that this proposal would relieve operation stresses of the Fire Department and limit the number of hours drawn away from the parking enforcement officer and Mr. Moyer's own duties as a public works crewmember. The volunteer staffers would be required to perform maintenance of equipment and equipment checks during their shifts. Due to the logistics of setting up this type of program Chief Burkholder requested consideration to be given to budget \$30,000 towards a six-month trial program.
- Chief Burkholder suggested that the fire company create a committee during 2020 to decide on a replacement fire and rescue vehicle to allow ordering of the vehicle in 2021 and delivery of the vehicle in 2022 to roll into another 10-year loan. It was noted that the combined sale of the ladder and rescue vehicles could provide \$100,000 towards the purchase of a new hybrid ladder and rescue vehicle at an approximate cost of \$750,000.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary