

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP/COUNCIL MEETING**  
**OCTOBER 22, 2019**

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, October 22, 2019 with the following persons present: Council President Philip Wert; Council Vice President Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Suzanne Thompson and Jack Gombach; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Borough Manager Nicholas Imbesi; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

<b>VISITOR:</b>	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	James Rogers	Resident
	Karen Livingood	Resident

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Council President Philip Wert called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Oswald Herbert asked if Council would be voting on a Resolution regarding a kiosk purchase agreement with the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation this evening. Mr. Wert indicated that this item was not on the agenda.

**PAYMENT APPROVAL REPORT 10/17/19 to 10/21/19:**

Council reviewed the report and there were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the 10/17/19 to 10/21/19 payment approval report. **Moved** by Christopher Lincoln and seconded by Jennifer Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**VERIZON PENN AVENUE MANHOLE PROJECT:**

Chief Powell indicated that the contractor requested written permission from Council to perform construction over night along Penn Avenue to include this permission in his request to PennDOT. The partial lane closure would affect eastbound traffic within the 200-300 blocks of Penn Avenue. Mr. Lincoln reviewed the proposed detour routes and recommended specifying a work timeframe of 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Motion to allow the Borough Manager to compose a letter granting Council's approval of the Penn Avenue manhole project with a recommended work timeframe of 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. **Moved** by Patrick Kaag and seconded by Jack Gombach. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET:**

Chief Powell provided an overview of the proposed budget noting the following items:

- 01-331-110 Vehicle Code Violations DJ revenues have exceeded the budget by approximately \$30,000. Reasons for the increase are in part due to the plate reader and two younger officers. The proposed 2020 revenue is \$72,100.
- 01-331-120 Violations of Ordinances & Statutes revenue exceeded the budget by 100% this year. Therefore, the proposed 2020 budget is \$12,500.
- 01-331-300 Parking Ticket revenue is estimated at year-end to be below budget due to the full-time parking enforcement officer's medical leave. Should Council approve an increase of parking enforcement coverage to two full-time officers, the 2020 budget could be increased to \$105,000.

Mr. Imbesi discussed the recent issues with the kiosk located near Chef Alan's Restaurant that would not accept credit card payments. A sign/label will be placed on the kiosks to instruct

consumers to leave their credit card in the machine until they are instructed to remove the card. A technician visited the kiosk and rebooted the system; however, step-by-step instructions are needed for staff to successfully complete this process.

- 01-331-320 Parking Meter Violations – Chief Powell reported 102 violations were issued during the first week of enforcement. With this limited data the 2020 budget is proposed at \$15,000.
- 01-361-100 Public Safety Police Services – Chief Powell noted the shortened bike race event lowered the anticipated revenue for 2019. The proposed 2020 budget is at \$9,000.
- 01-391-410 Sale of Police Vehicle revenue has been budgeted at \$0 for 2020 due to the uncertainty of vehicle purchases.
- 01-410-121; 01-410-123; 01-410-131 Police Wages are increased by 1.5% and 1.5% per the contract.

Chief Powell recapped a discussion held earlier in the year to potentially hire an additional officer. The average police to citizen ratio for a population of 4,200 residents is recommended to average 3.5 officers per 1,000 inhabitants, West Reading's current ratio is 3.09. It was noted that factoring in hospital staff, emergency room patients, hospital visitors, Lofts at Narrow and the Villas at Narrow additional residential units, the addition of businesses such as the Knitting Mills, Wawa and medical school, and coverage of events should all be considered. Chief Powell noted that the majority of service is provided to the Penn Avenue area with 20% of services being offered to the hospital alone. These demands do not allow a sufficient police presence within residential neighborhoods. The addition of a fifteenth officer would allow an officer to be assigned to the Penn Avenue area during the busiest service timeframe of 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., including event coverage. Also, traffic counts were provided for westbound traffic only, which averaged 9,301 vehicles per day. Chief Powell understands the financial constraints but indicated that approving a specific person for specific purposes would be a good investment.

Mr. Lincoln asked if the additional officer would play a role in assisting the parking enforcement officer. Chief Powell stated this is an option, however the officer would focus primarily on pedestrian safety.

Mr. Wert noted the importance of maintaining public safety and during his years of service to the Borough, he has never heard a resident request a reduction to the number of police officers.

It was noted that there are eight viable new police officer candidates that are currently going through background checks.

- 01-410-134 Parking Enforcement Wages are budgeted based on the potential new full-time hire at \$67,830.
- 01-410-135 Shift Differential for Field Training Officer is budgeted at \$10,500 for two new potential hires; this would be reduced in 2021.
- 01-410-138 Officer in Charge – this line item is for a difference in hourly pay while the Chief is away to maintain the chain of command, which is budgeted at \$3,600.
- 01-410-160 FICA/Medicare Taxes is budgeted at \$34,268, which is the Borough's portion of Medicare taxes including the potential of three new hires.
- 01-410-171 Overtime was averaged with two new hires at \$243,500, however this may be lowered since the amount of overtime may be reduced with the new hires.
- 01-410-172 Holiday Pay is contractual and is estimated at \$107,620 with two new hires.
- 01-410-190 Civil Service Testing Fees was budgeted at \$3,000, however this may be removed should Council choose not to hire new staff members.

- 01-410-194 Hiring Cost for Full-Time Officers was budgeted at \$0 since the current interview process candidates would be eligible for a period of at least one year.
- 01-410-196 Health & Accident Insurance is estimated at \$424,220 including three new hires with family coverage.
- 01-410-242 Ammo & Weapon Supplies has been lowered to \$13,000 for 2020. Chief Powell indicated that there are a number of 10-year old handguns that should be replaced and an option to trade them.
- 01-410-252 Technology Fees remain at \$60,000 since there has been no increase to the cost of services.
- 01-410-314 Legal Services exceeded the budget for 2019 due to two civil service actions. The 2020 budget has been increased to \$10,000 in anticipation of contract renewal elements.
- 01-410-320 Communication Expense was raised to \$38,000 due to a 7% increase for dispatching services. Chief Powell noted that this includes prepayment of in-car computers through the County's bulk purchase program.
- 01-410-321 New Radios have been paid in full; therefore, this has been budgeted at \$0 for 2020.
- 01-410-336 Vehicle Replacement proposed 2020 budget is \$25,000 for a partial vehicle purchase. Chief Powell signified his confidence in the Mayor's fundraising campaign to purchase a new vehicle.
- 01-410-337 Vehicle Maintenance & Repair has been lowered to \$15,500 for the 2020 budget. Chief Powell noted a reduction to this line item in part due to the new hard-working mechanic.
- 01-410-350 Berks County Crime Alert Donation is proposed to remain at \$500 for the 2020 budget.
- 01-410-351 Police Auto Insurance has been increased to \$14,688 due to an estimated increase of 8%. Mr. Wert suggested shopping for insurance. Mrs. Rentschler stated that a Tompkins Bank broker continually shops for the best policy.
- 01-410-352 Vehicle Claim Repairs exceeded the 2019 budget due to a flood claim; Mrs. Rentschler noted insurance revenue offsets this expenditure. The 2020 budget would remain at \$1,000.
- 01-410-460 Education/Training 2020 budget has been lowered to \$16,000 to maintain officer certifications. Chief Powell thanked Council for their generosity in providing funds for training since this appears to motivate personnel.
- 30-410-000 Police Capital Expense proposed budget is \$30,000 for potential parking enforcement upgrades to alternate lots or on street paid parking.

Suzanne Thompson requested confirmation that Crime Watch funds had been transferred to the Canine Fund. Mrs. Rentschler confirmed that the funds have been transferred.

Ms. Thompson provided Council members documentation of a nonprofit accounting basics article and read a section pertaining to the duties of a finance committee and requested the portion read verbally to be inserted into the record of the minutes. Ms. Thompson stated that the purpose of providing this documentation was to clarify the actions of the committee in searching for small business models to perform employee performance evaluations in an effort to reduce the Borough's exposure to risk. Her statement can be found on page five of these minutes.

Mr. Imbesi offered to perform these evaluations, however felt that it was unnecessary due to the small number of employees and the constant daily communication/interaction. It was also suggested that an amendment be made to the enabling ordinance should the committee wish to enumerate employee performance evaluations as a part of their duties.

Mr. Gombach suggested a review of local municipal finance committee models for a list of best practices and the typical practice of a separate committee to handle personnel items. Mr. Wert stated this enabling ordinance is fairly new, and was drafted similar to municipalities such as Phoenixville and West Chester, which was created to empower the committee to accomplish a set of goals. It was also noted that a separate Personnel Committee would handle items such as interviews and performance evaluations.

Mr. Wert referred to the parliamentary procedure, as guided through principals of Robert's Rules of Order, in conducting meetings and making decisions as a group and questioned the ability of a member to insert documentation of their opinion into the record of the minutes. Ms. Thompson conveyed her point of privilege and suggested to obtain clarification through a discussion with the solicitor.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to executive session at 8:11 p.m. to discuss police personnel items. Council reconvened at 8:16 p.m. and Mr. Wert stated that no action was needed at this time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary

TO BE INSERTED INTO THE RECORD OF THE MINUTES OF  
THE WEST READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
OCTOBER 22, 2019

From the article, "NONPROFIT ACCOUNTING BASICS," published by [www.nonprofitaccountingbasics.org](http://www.nonprofitaccountingbasics.org).  
pg.2:

Finance committees are also often charged with ensuring compliance and/or developing other policies that further serve to protect the organization and manage its exposure to risk. These include establishing policies surrounding:

- Personnel policies
- Executive compensation packages (in the absence of a separate human resources committee)
- Long-term contracts or leases
- Loans or lines of credit
- Internet use and computer security
- Capital purchases
- Disposition of donated stock
- Insurance requirements and reviews
- Record retention
- Gift acceptance

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Note: A copy of the full 3 page article has been provided to all Council members.

Respectfully Submitted

  
Suzanne Thompson