

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP  
NOVEMBER 11, 2017**

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop at Borough Hall on Saturday, November 11, 2017 with the following persons present: Council President Carl G. Garman; Council Vice President Nathalie Kulesa; Council Members Philip Wert, Christopher Lincoln, Nicholas Imbesi, Suzanne Thompson, Grace Craze; Police Chief Stephen Powell; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Finance Consultant Donal Renninger; and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira. Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr. was unable to attend.

Visitors Present: David Amato, Nicholas Gardecki and Andrew Kearney

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Council President Carl G. Garman called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**2018 CRITERIUM EVENT**

Council discussed at length whether to consider hosting another event during the month of August 2018. A separate committee will meet to further discuss a venue policy and fees that would be associated with this type of event.

**2018 WATER/SEWER EXPENSES**

Mr. Murray suggested replacement of vehicle #52, a 2002 2-½-ton dump/salt/plow vehicle. This cost would be split between water, sewer and trash expenses and anticipates the sale of the 2002 vehicle to generate approximately 1/3 the cost of a new vehicle.

**2018 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

- **Pine Street Water Line** - Mr. Murray proposed replacement of the water main on Pine Street, a “T” would be installed at Oak Terrace in an effort to increase water pressure to this area. The roadway would also be repaved bringing the estimated cost of this project to \$450,000.
- **Linden Lane Lateral Line Replacement** – Approximately twelve properties on the north end of Linden Lane currently have sewer laterals that are connected in a “Y”. Mr. Murray suggested replacement of these laterals to serve the individual properties and repave the entire length of Linden Lane. The estimated cost for this project is \$275,000.
- **South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Museum Road Paving** – Mr. Murray proposed overnight milling and overlay of the roadway from Oak Terrace to Parkside Drive North. The estimated cost for this project is \$160,000.

Mr. Murray also reminded Council of the Wyomissing Creek Watershed Coalition MS4 funding of \$18,800 for five years and the required televising of storm sewer lines estimated to cost \$11,200. Council suggested the creation of a separate storm water fund within the sewer expenses for MS4 and storm water related expenses.

Mr. Murray departed the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

**2018 BUDGET**

**ADMINISTRATION:**

Mrs. Rentschler presented portions of the Administration budget.

- The 2017 revenue pertaining to real estate transfer tax is higher than estimated, Mr. Imbesi stated this was due to the larger property transfers of Vanity Fair, Spruce Manor and remaining lots within the Villas development.

- The earned income tax that is disbursed quarterly was higher than budgeted and Council agreed to increase the 2018 proposed budget to \$550,000.
- The business privilege tax is lower than budgeted primarily due to reduced hospital construction projects, however delinquent collection has increased. The proposed budget for 2018 will be lowered to \$400,000.
- Cable TV franchise tax was higher than what was budgeted again. The 2018 budget will be increased to \$76,000.
- Due to a history of reduced revenue for the foreign fire insurance, determined by the Public Employee Retirement Commission, the budgeted amount for 2018 was reduced to \$20,000. This revenue is passed through to the West Reading Fireman's Relief.
- The manager's salary will increase 1.5% with a matching raise of 1.5% on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The treasurer's salary, which was based on the 2016 hourly rate did not take into account overtime. Due to the increased amount of time needed to perform these duties Council agreed to increase the 2018 budget from \$50,000 to \$55,000.
- The 2018 budgeted wages for office staff has increased due to the additional employee that will be shared with the Police Department.
- The general expense budget increased from \$10,000 to \$12,000 for website development, hosting and support.
- Chief Powell noted discussions within the Traffic Committee meeting regarding a potential six month trial installation of a parking kiosk and the potential hiring of a part-time parking enforcement officer due to the amount of time needed to enforce illegal parking during street sweeping. Additional lighting would be needed for a kiosk to be installed on the Franklin Street municipal lot. Should the owner of the West Reading Shopping Center be agreeable to providing a number of parking spaces for this trail, a legal agreement would be required.
- WRCRF Cooperation Agreement would increase \$1200 to provide a 3% salary increase. Following a lengthy discussion of monetary benefits received by residents and businesses by this organization, which offset the proposed increase, a vote was made that resulted in allowing the increase. The existing agreement will be revised to reflect current dates and increased funding. **In favor of the increase** - Mr. Imbesi, Mr. Wert, Mr. Lincoln, Mrs. Kulesa and Mr. Garman. **Against the increase** – Ms. Thompson and Ms. Craze.
- Pension/State Aid budget was increased to \$396,036 per the MMO plus 5% for non-uniform staff.
- Funds are available within the current budget to purchase a desk and laptop computer for the new administrative staff.
- Chief Powell reported the cabling located at the 5<sup>th</sup> and Penn Avenue intersection has been inspected and is holding up well. The Public Works Department could replace the collapsed underground conduit while the street is open for an approximate cost of \$1,000 or hiring of a contractor would cost approximately \$6,500. Mr. Lincoln noted the Green-Light-Go grant might include replacement of the conduit.

Chief Powell departed the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

- School crossing guard budget has been set to reflect the bill received in 2017, however a decision has not been made as to whether the Borough should be paying for the crossing guards.
- Auditing services are budgeted based on the 3-year contract price of \$15,000 per year.
- Accounting services exceeded the 2017 budget due to November and December 2016 invoicing being paid in 2017. There was no increase to service fees for 2018; the long-term CPA has been consistently charging the same reduced rate.

- Engineering services exceeded the 2017 budget due to larger projects such as Lofts at Narrow, Vanity Fair and Parkview Road Bridge. Mrs. Hoffman will research whether these charges are passed through to the developer. It was suggested for better tracking to include engineering services with their respective capital project.
- Communication expense budget has increased to accommodate the new phone and internet system.
- Postage budget has been reduced to \$5,200 based on history of expenses. Council agreed this expense could be reduced by offering the newsletter electronically and mailed to residents only upon request. This change would also reduce the \$3,500 printing cost.
- Workers' Compensation Insurance has been increased for 2018 to reflect the rate increase from 1.045 to 1.306 percent.

An additional budget workshop will be held on Tuesday, November 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Meeting adjourned 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cynthia Madeira  
Assistant to the Manager