

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP / COUNCIL MEETING**

**November 23, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, November 23, 2021 with the following persons present: Council President Jack Gombach; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Samantha Kaag, and Ryan Lineaweaver (via Zoom); Chief of Police Glenn Granitz, Jr.; Sergeant Ryan Phillips, Sergeant Wayne Holben, Police Officer Jesse Stock and Edward DeLozier; Public Works Team Leader Kerry Grassley; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler, Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Borough Manager Dean Murray (via Zoom); and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

**VISITORS:**

Zachary Shaver, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Jack Gombach called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., which was followed the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence, and Roll Call.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**  
There was no public comment.

3. **DEPARTMENTAL COMMENDATION:**  
Chief Granitz reported that last Friday evening Officer Stock, among others, were dispatched to a domestic disturbance call with a female perched on a third-floor roof of a residence. Officer Stock made his way to the female on the roof and conversed with her for forty-minutes until she was laughing and smiling. Officer Stock then guided the female back into the home and remained with her until she arrived at Reading Hospital for mental health services. Chief Granitz noted that the commendation was written and recommended by the Officers of the West Reading Police Department and then presented to Officer Stock.

4. **STREET CLOSURE:**  
Mr. Gombach requested consideration to close North Sixth Avenue from Penn Avenue to Court Street for Small Business Saturday on November, 27, 2021.

Motion to approve the closure of North Sixth Avenue from Penn Avenue to Court Street on Saturday, November 27, 2021 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for the Small Business Saturday event.

**Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

5. **RESOLUTION:**  
A revision to a previously adopted resolution was needed to correctly list the Wyomissing Borough Primary Delegate of the Berks County Tax Collection Executive Committee.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2021-20 Appointing Individuals to the Berks County Tax Collection Executive Committee listing Michele Bare as the Wyomissing Primary Delegate and Dean Murray as the Alternate Delegate. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

6. **PUBLIC WORKS:**

Mr. Grassley requested consideration to approve a temporary part-time hire to assist during the month of December that would not exceed twenty-five hours per week for either a six-week period at an expense of \$1,728 or a five-week period at an expense of \$1,440. During this time frame the crew will be short on average four people per day to handle street sweeping on a daily basis, monthly and quarterly meter readings, trash collection twice per week and instances such as today where a water main break and sewer backup occurred. Mr. Grassley's son who assisted during the summer months is available and trained for this temporary position.

Motion to approve the part-time hire for the Public Works Department not to exceed six-weeks or \$1,728. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

7. **FINALIZE 2022 BUDGET:**

Mr. Murray presented the finalized budget noting that the 2020 budget had been adopted with a projected 2021 budget deficit of \$306,805. Staff and Council exercised diligence in monitoring revenues and expenses, and with the additional American Rescue Plan funds the projected 2021 General Fund balance should have a surplus of \$25,000. A projected deficit for 2022 is \$198,058.

Mr. Gombach noted that at this time two years ago the Borough was projected to be out of money, and with all of the surprise expenses, including legal fees this year we are projected to end the year with a surplus.

Mr. Murray noted the following three proposed rate increases for 2022:

- **08-279-099 Sewer Fund** – A 10% increase is proposed to both residential and commercial sewer rates to continue renovations to an eighty-year-old sewer system. It was noted that another rate increase would not be necessary for roughly four to five years.
- **09-279-099 Sanitation Fund** – In order to continue collection services as usual it was recommended to increase the quarterly fee to residents from \$85 to \$100. Due to rapidly increasing landfill disposal costs repayment of the loan from the Water Fund will not be made in full this year. The remaining amount will be transferred early next year. An alternative to raising rates would be to reduce trash collection to once-a-week for an estimated savings of \$16,700.

Mr. Grassley noted a reduction to the landfill disposal tonnage following his conversation with the trash hauler. The tonnage collected the week before this conversation was 22.25, the following week was 13.44. Mr. Grassley will continue to monitor the collection practices to ensure the limits for removal are being followed.

Mr. Lincoln indicated that at a cost of \$400 per year for the hauler to visit each home 156 times, the average cost per visit is \$2.25. It was noted that if landfill fees are reduced the rate could be reduced next year.

Mrs. Rentschler shared the 2021-year end estimate for the Sanitation Fund Balance of \$7,218 that is less than the \$10,000 needed to transfer to the Water Fund to pay back the loan. The shortage of funds to repay the loan in 2021 have been added to the 2022

budget. It was noted that if the sanitation rate is increased to \$100 per unit, per quarter a projected 2022-year end fund balance would be \$45,000.

- **01-301-125 Real Estate Road Tax** – Increasing the road tax 0.25 mil to a total of 1.00 mil to assist in addressing the needed paving and curbing repairs.

Mrs. Rentschler noted that the Special Reserve Fund currently has \$300,000 for water projects and \$100,000 for sewer projects and recommended transferring \$200,000 to the Sewer Fund to fund capital expenses of the Linden Lane sewer project that has recently begun. It was noted that going forward, the Special Reserve Fund will only contain General Fund revenues and that the individual Water, and Sewer Funds will keep their capital monies in their respective funds.

Motion to amend the Agenda to include a transfer of funds to cover expenses of the Linden Lane sewer project. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to adopt Resolution 2021-21 Transfer of Funds from Special Reserve to the Sewer Fund to transfer \$200,000 of water capital funds from the Special Reserve Fund to the Sewer Fund to cover expenses of the Linden Lane sewer project. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mrs. Rentschler shared Mr. Janssen's recommendation to refrain from saving \$10,000 annually towards a replacement street sweeper purchase since the General Obligation Bonds will be maturing in 2032, freeing up approximately \$800,000 to purchase a sweeper outright at that time. It was decided to set aside the proposed \$10,000 since there is not a proposed general tax increase.

Mrs. Rentschler noted that the two small road capital projects planned next year include \$70,000 for Grape Street, and \$75,000 for the 500 block of Sunset Road totaling \$145,000. The \$275,000 Sycamore Road project has been delayed to 2023 to allow time to collect funds generated by the increased road tax.

Funds have been set aside to install an additional section of black fencing at the pool. A proposal to complete this fencing project will be requested for Council's consideration.

Chief Granitz noted his and Mr. Murray's research of leasing vehicles for both the Police and Public Works Departments and found a cost savings for the police vehicles. It would be a three-year lease with three annual payments. The older police vehicles would be shared as needed between departments. A proposed fleet plan would be to purchase one vehicle per year barring any accidents/loss of vehicles.

Mr. Grassley reported plans to perform the Spruce Street water project next year in-house with a savings of roughly \$200,000.

Chief Granitz recommended a review of the fee schedule for Police and Public Works services following his research of other municipality fee schedules.

Mr. Lincoln thanked staff members for their hard work to include larger ticket items and keeping the increases to a minimum while providing great services to our residents.

Motion to advertise the proposed 2022 budget as presented. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Mr. Gombach noted an executive session that was held at 6:00 p.m. this evening to discuss personnel matters.
9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**  
There was no public comment.
10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary