

BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP/COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, September 25, 2018 with the following persons present: Council President Nicholas Imbesi; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Suzanne Thompson, Nicholas Gardecki, David Amato; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Police Chief Stephen Powell; Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira. Council Members Christopher Lincoln and Kirk Mullen were unable to attend.

VISITORS PRESENT: Karen Livingood, Resident
Oswald Herbert, Resident

CALL TO ORDER:

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER:

Mr. Imbesi expressed due to lack of further communications with the Wyomissing School District and a delay within the Wyomissing Borough to proceed, a recommendation was made to table discussions to avoid incurring solicitor fees to review the Agreement for School Resource Officer.

Motion to table discussions regarding the School Resource Officer. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Amato. **Motion carried 5-0.**

PESTICIDE CONTROL OPERATIONS:

Mr. Wert noted discussion during last night's Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) meeting of the recent oversight by the Berks County Conservation District, which deployed a truck spraying a chemical component through various streets of the Borough in an effort to control a high number of adult mosquitoes capable of transmitting the West Nile virus. On behalf of the EAC, Mr. Wert requested correspondence from the Conservation District as to their procedures and protocols regarding chemicals applications, which should allow residents an opportunity to avoid the areas/activities within a specified time frame. Mayor Andrew Kearney stated he would inquire with the Berks County Conservation District.

2019 BUDGET

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Police Chief Stephen Powell presented the Police Department proposed 2019 Budget.

- Chief Powell indicated the projected year-end 2018 revenue for 01-331-110 Vehicle Code Violations from the District Justice should yield approximately \$60,000 netting \$10,000 more than estimated, however, suggested leaving the revenue at \$50,000 for the estimated 2019 budget.
- 01-331-300 Parking Tickets has increased to approximately \$8,000 per month with the new part-time parking enforcement officer. With the recommended ticket fee being raised to \$30 the 2019 proposed budget was \$105,000. Chief Powell recommended review of the mechanism, which establishes the parking ticket fee in order to amend for 2019.
- The recent schedule adjustment of the full-time parking enforcement officer to focus on permit parking violations has yielded additional revenue. Also, it was recommended to raise the ticket fee to \$30 for 01-331-310 Permit Parking Violations raising the proposed 2019 budget to \$480. Mr. Gardecki inquired as to the fairness of residents whom reside on a permit parking street being able to park anywhere in the Borough. Mr. Imbesi stated following the trial kiosk parking within the shopping

center parking lot and the merchant requested paid parking along Penn Avenue potential, Borough-wide permit parking may be a consideration.

- 01-361-100 Public Safety – Police Services was increased 50% to \$15,000 should Council approve the bike race for 2019. Also, Chief Powell recommended increasing the rate per hour to coincide with annual staffing raises.
- 01-361-110 Police Report Photo Copies was increased to \$5,500 to reflect the revenue generated during 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- The noted revenue changes increased 41.73% to total \$192,180.
- 01-410-171 Overtime for Sergeants and Patrolmen increased to \$237,000 with the anticipated 3% raise. Council inquired as to causes for overtime, Chief Powell stated local and county hearings are the primary cause, there have been modifications to the Sergeant's schedule to cover street shifts to eliminate training overtime.
- 01-410-210 Materials and Supplies were increased to \$7,000 due to the uncertainty of office paper pricing.
- 01-410-225 Investigative Expenses was reduced to \$2,000 to reflect the recent past expenditures.
- 01-410-242 Ammo and Weapon Supplies was increased to \$16,000. Council inquired as to uses of ammo, Chief Powell stated training shoots are performed twice per year, range use, certifications and stock replenishment. Bulk purchases are practiced to keep costs down.
- 01-410-252 Technology Fees were increased to \$60,000 due to the unknown costs of the recent County provided firewall protection of the Cody system and improvement to the Sixth and Penn Avenue camera.
- 01-410-314 Legal Services were reduced to \$7,500 due to recent history of expenditures.
- 01-410-315 Arbitration Fees were reduced to \$3,000 to reflect the zero expenditure during 2016, 2017 and 2018. Mr. Wert expressed his appreciation for the reduction in legal and arbitration fees since Police Chief Powell has been in office. Chief Powell reported that there have been no issues and strives for staff to be on common ground.
- 01-410-319 Telephone Expense for landlines and cell phones remained at \$14,000. Mr. Wert recommended obtaining a price quote from an alternate cell phone provider to potentially reduce this expenditure.
- 01-410-320 Communication Expense was increased to \$36,000 for County Police dispatching services due to an increase in their fee structure.
- Chief Powell requested in lieu of \$37,982 for vehicle replacement expenditure to purchase two license plate reader cameras to be mounted within two patrol vehicles. Due to the state no longer providing registration stickers, pulling a vehicle over for expired registration has been inhibited. The license plate reader would capture illegal, stolen and bad plates as well as alert to a warrant status. Costs for this technology could be recuperated through the additional generation of revenue. Also, Chief Powell suggested setting excess revenues aside to replace vehicles. The cost for two camera systems would be \$14,025 with an annual software update fee of \$1,250 per unit. Following discussions it was decided to purchase one license plate reader in January and a second system in July should funds be available and the trial be successful.
- 01-410-339 Tires was reduced to \$2,000 due to reduced expenditures during 2018. There has been less wear and tear on the tires, more than likely from the completion of major hospital construction.
- 01-410-740 Major Equipment Purchases was reduced to \$12,500 due to no anticipated copier or shredder replacement.

An additional \$20,000 will be transferred from 01-410-336 Vehicle Replacements to 30-410-000 Police Capital Expense. The above modifications brought the total Police Department expenditures for the 2019 budget to \$2,022,258.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council recessed to executive session at 8:40 p.m. to discuss a contract item. Council reconvened at 9:09 p.m. and announced no action was needed at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Karen Livingood inquired as to overtime charges by the Public Works Department related to the weekly Farmers' Market. Mrs. Hoffman stated four-hours of overtime are logged to setup and tear down lane restrictions for this event. Mrs. Livingood then inquired as to overtime hours related to the Fall Festival event, it was noted these are in-kind services provided to the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation. Mrs. Livingood inquired as to payment of overtime charges for the various West Reading Tavern events. Mrs. Hoffman stated those fees are charged to the special event applicant since these are for-profit events.

Oswald Herbert expressed concern regarding a source of revenue being generated with the creation of a Borough-wide permit-parking program. Council stated discussions have not yet begun for this type of program; however felt that a residence exceeding a specified number of vehicles should be assessed a fee per vehicle for utilizing a larger amount of public assets.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Gardecki and seconded by Mr. Amato. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Manager