

BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP/COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 29, 2018

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Saturday, September 29, 2018 with the following persons present: Council President Nicholas Imbesi; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Christopher Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson, Nicholas Gardecki; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira. Council Member David Amato attended the meeting via cell phone from a remote location.

VISITOR PRESENT: Oswald Herbert, Resident

CALL TO ORDER:

Council President Nicholas Imbesi called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Oswald Herbert stated due to the Police Department encompassing approximately 40% of the budget, the recent request for technology to read license plates seems excessive when there are alternate methods to perform this task. Mayor Andrew Kearney noted the equipment purchase would be in lieu of purchasing a replacement vehicle and the license plate reader technology could potentially fund itself within one year, therefore not incurring an additional expense and could in fact generate additional revenue.

2019 BUDGET

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT:

Nicholas Imbesi presented the Administration Department proposed 2019 Budget.

- 01-310-100 Real Estate Transfer Tax was increased to \$75,000 with the anticipated construction and sale of residential lots located within The Villa's development.
- 01-310-200 Earned Income Tax was reduced to coincide with 2018 revenue.
- 01-310-500 Local Services Tax was increased slightly to coincide with 2018 revenue.
- 01-310-800 Business Privilege Tax was reduced to be in line with 2018 revenue.
- 01-310-830 Business Privilege Tax Delinquent was reduced by \$5,000, however added to the Business Privilege Tax line in anticipation of more timely payments.
- 01-341-100 Interest Earnings was increased slightly due to raised interest rates.
- Administrative expenses pertaining to salaries/wages were increased 3%.
- 01-400-312 Accounting Services were reduced slightly to \$12,000.
- 01-400-313 Engineering Services pertaining to general items and meetings will need to be discussed following receipt of 2019 engineer rate information.
- 01-400-314 Legal Services were discussed and noted the majority of fees assessed pertain to meeting attendance. Council discussed limiting the amount of Council packet material provided to the solicitor for their review and modifying the agenda to allow the solicitor's report and executive session to take place immediately following public comment and presentations. This expenditure was reduced to \$25,000 and should be reevaluated following a trial agenda modification.
- 01-400-320 Communication Expense was discussed at length to shop alternate cell phone carriers to reduce costs. Mrs. Hoffman suggested review of potential union contractual obligations prior to making any changes. Mr. Imbesi indicated he would like to speak with the Public Works Department to obtain their feedback prior to making any changes.
- 01-400-325 Postage was discussed and suggested review of online bill pay options to avoid writing checks and purchasing envelopes and postage.
- 01-400-340 Advertising and Printing costs were discussed and found to be primarily Reading Eagle advertising costs. Council suggested review of pricing from Vista print to reduce cost of envelopes and business cards.

- 01-400-750 Minor Equipment Purchases was increased to \$1,000 in anticipation of purchasing two desks and a shredder.
- 01-492-090 Recreation Allocation was discussed at length and it was recommended to review individual events/activities to reduce expenditures. Offering non-resident use of the pool this past summer did increase revenue, however the pool is still operating at a loss.

The above modifications brought the total Administration Department expenditures for the 2019 budget to \$643,852 or a reduction of 2.13%. The shared building expenses would be discussed with the Public Works Department budget.

ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE AGREEMENT:

An animal control contract has been received from the Animal Rescue League, which outlines their new fee-for-services. The annual municipal baseline fee has been increased to \$1,500 with an additional charge for services performed. An example was provided based on actual services provided to the Borough during 2016 and 2017, which averaged an additional cost of \$7,653 annually. A representative from the Animal Rescue League plans to attend the October 17th Council meeting to answer questions.

2019 CRITERIUM EVENT:

Council discussed at length approval of the requested August 3, 2019 West Reading Criterium event. As previously noted by Chief Powell a Sunday event, which may assist the business district would place additional stress upon public service staffing. Stipulations such as added focus on West Reading as the host of the event and contract/agreement could be negotiated at a later time.

Motion to approve the August 3, 2019 Criterium Event with condition of approved contract and agreement no later than March 1, 2019. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Gardecki. **Motion carried 5-0.**

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:27 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Manager