

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

December 20, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, December 20, 2011 with the following persons present: Council President Kevin M. Conrad; Vice President Philip C. Wert; Council Members Elizabeth L. Heckler, Nathalie R. Kulesa, Deborah Hutcheson, James J. Gallen Jr., Amy B. Good-Ashman; Mayor Shane J. Keller; Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler; Police Chief Edward C. Fabriziani; Borough Solicitor Daniel P. Becker; Chief Code Enforcement Officer Tracey L. Levering; Recreation Coordinator Daphne E. Klahr; Public Works Director Dean E. Murray; Elm Street Manager Dean L. Rohrbach; Administrative Assistant Cathy L. Hoffman; Borough Engineer Terry Naugle. Fire Chief Mark D. Burkholder arrived at 7:30 p.m.

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| <u>VISITORS:</u> | Audrey Schaeffer | Resident |
| | Tina Shenk | Property/Business Owner |
| | Ashley Gold | Reading Eagle |
| | Amber Rambo | Resident |
| | Karen & Jim Livingood | Residents |

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.
3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**
Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to approve the minutes of November, November 15 (regular session), November 12 and November 29, 2011 (budget sessions). **Motion carried.**
4. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**
 - a. **Belovich Townhouse Development** – There were no updates at this time.
 - b. **2011 Audit Services** – Mr. Sichler said he had spoken with other accounting firms and has been told that their pricing is based on time and materials and it would be impossible to provide any concrete pricing. He said that both he and Treasurer Sharon Morgan have no issues with RKL, therefore they recommend staying with RKL. Council decided to give further consideration to the audit services discussion therefore it will be postponed until August which should provide sufficient time to look at it again prior to the 2012 Audit.
 - c. **2010 Tax Collector Audit** – **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Gallen to accept the 2010 Tax Collector Audit. **Motion carried.**
 - d. **Purchasing Policy** – Mr. Sichler referred to the current Purchasing Policy and the proposed policy which has been revised for clarification but also contains amendments in accordance with Borough Code. There was some discussion concerning the “cost of purchase” between \$10,000.00 and \$18,499.99 and it was decided that prior written approval of the Borough Manager and Borough Council will be required for purchases in this category. **Moved** by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Purchasing Policy with the change of having the underlined sentence in paragraph 4 (*Prior written approval of the Borough Manager and*

Borough Council is required for purchases in this category.) also inserted at the end of paragraph 3.

Motion carried.

- e. 2012 Budget – Mr. Sichler spoke about the pie-chart handout which detailed the water usage for 2010 and compared the various users by category. He noted that the possibility of increasing certain rates had been discussed previously however commercial monthly customers already pay 15.4% more than residential customers. He added that water rates were increased in 2011 by 20%.

Mr. Conrad stated that at the November 29th budget meeting, Council had agreed to advertise the budget and it was advertised in accordance with the Borough Code and therefore ready for the vote. Mrs. Heckler reiterated the need for emergency reserve funds and Ms. Good-Ashman noted that for this budget, an amount equal to 1 mil was transferred from reserve funds, and that in future, the budget will have to be cut by 1 mil or taxes will have to be increased.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the budget as advertised, with a 0% tax increase for 2012.

Ms. Good-Ashman commented that when funds were transferred into the reserve fund, Council made a commitment to determine how the funds would be utilized, whether it should remain where it is, use it to pay down debt or not incur new debt. She added that it is imperative that Council not forget to determine the best use during 2012.

Voting yes – Mrs. Kulesa, Ms. Hutcheson, Mr. Wert, Mrs. Heckler, Ms. Good-Ashman, Mr. Conrad

Voting no – Mr. Gallen

Motion carried 6 – 1.

5. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. Ordinance 1005 – Fees for Professional Services – The Ordinance has been advertised and is ready for the vote. As there were no comments, it was **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to approve Ordinance 1005, Fees for Professional Services. **Motion carried.**

6. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

- a. Solicitor's Report – Mr. Becker said that there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Borough of West Reading, the Borough of Wyomissing and the Wyomissing Area School District that is ready for the Mayor's signature. He added that it is a standard document that has been signed by the other parties and noted that the document is executed annually. **Moved** by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to authorize Mayor Keller to execute the Memorandum of Understanding between the Borough of West Reading Police Department, the Borough of Wyomissing Police Department and the Wyomissing Area School District. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the Solicitor's Report. **Motion carried.**

- b. Engineer's Report – Mr. Naugle reported that the 3rd Avenue sidewalk project is almost complete and will be finished within a few days. He noted that he, the contractor and Mr. Sichler had recently completed a walk through and had reviewed the punch list. Mr. Sichler also noted that 2 unnecessary utility poles near Spruce and 3rd will be removed as part of the contract.

The ADA project on Wayne Avenue is more than 90% complete, with the last ramp being poured that morning. Mr. Sichler noted that there were funds available from the project so another ramp has been installed on Sycamore Road at Parkview Road to accommodate a resident who has the need for one however there are none in that area.

Regarding the MS4 notation in his report, Mr. Naugle stated that there will be a Memorandum of Understanding coming out in the early part of 2012 for municipalities of the Wyomissing Creek Watershed group. The draft agreement is being prepared now. Mr. Naugle also noted that there is a request for a budgetary commitment of \$5000 from each of the seven municipalities of the Watershed Group. The County is trying to obtain grant money to cover this cost, therefore the \$5000 may not be necessary.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Engineer's Report.
Motion carried.

7. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:**

- a. Reorganization Meeting, January 3, 2012 – Mr. Sichler said that in accordance with the Borough Code, the Reorganization meeting has been scheduled and advertised for Tuesday, January 3, 2012. Mr. Conrad noted that Mr. Becker will not be available for the meeting therefore he will send someone from his office to attend. Mr. Conrad also noted that the advertising for the meeting needs to be ratified, therefore it was **Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to ratify the advertising of the Reorganization Meeting.
Motion carried.
- b. Fire Truck Sale – Mr. Sichler said that he has received several offers for the fire truck online, however some may not be legitimate. Another possibility is to scrap the vehicle which would be worth approximately \$5000. He added that the Keystone Hook and Ladder Fire Company #1, which is a historic group that collects equipment, would like to convert the truck and use it for a tour vehicle. While this would remove all concerns regarding the ladder not being used (because it would be removed completely) the Keystone Fire Company does not have the funds available and would need to fund raise in order to pay the \$5000.

Of the legitimate online bidders, someone from Mohrsville bid \$4500, however Mr. Sichler has not had an opportunity to speak to the bidder to determine if they would sign any indemnification for the truck and what their plans are for the vehicle. It was noted that the inspection for truck expires on December 31st and will not pass inspection therefore a decision needs to be made.

Several Council members liked that idea of the truck being used by a historic group rather than scraping it. It was also decided that the bids that were received should be formally rejected. Meanwhile, the Keystone group will be contacted for more information, so a decision can be

made at the Reorganization Meeting on January 3rd 2012.

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Borough Manager's Report. **Motion carried.**

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT & MAIN STREET REPORT:**

Mayor Keller reported that the Christmas Tree Lighting was very well attended and that many people stayed on the Avenue afterward, with more than 100 people enjoying refreshments at Saint James Church. Mayor Keller thanked everyone who helped out with the event.

Mayor Keller spoke about the 'Run Santa Run' 5K event that was held earlier in the month with 395 people participating. He thanked Sheriff Weaknecht for supplying extra personnel to man the intersections during the run. He also said that he had attended the Kiddies Christmas Party at the Fire Company which was a huge success and commended Chief Burkholder for the wonderful job that he and his volunteers did.

Regarding the Code Secretary position, Mayor Keller said that they are almost ready to bring forward a candidate, and will do so at the January 3rd Reorganization Meeting. He also noted that 30 applications had been received for the part-time Police Secretary. They will be reviewing the applications and scheduling interviews soon.

Ms. Hutcheson added that because of the feedback from the runners of the 5K, there has been some discussion regarding a 'Run Rabbit Run' in the spring.

Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to approve the Mayor's Report. **Motion carried.**

9. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. Code Enforcement – Mrs. Levering apologized to Council for not having a report prepared for the meeting.
- b. Police Department – Chief Fabriziani said that he did not have a written report, however noted the following:
 - The Tree Lighting went off without any problems.
 - Ruth Cardell has resigned as Captain of the Fire Police, effective 12/31/2011. A list has been posted for people who are interested in serving as head of the fire police. Per the policy that was put in place last year, once the names have been received, the Mayor, Chief Fabriziani and Chief Burkholder will interview the candidates and then the Mayor will make a recommendation for ratification.
 - Regarding the 5K run, Chief Fabriziani said that it went well, and he will be sitting down with the Run organizers to make plans for the run in the spring.
 - There has been an increase in criminal activity, including several crimes against property and persons, a robbery and assault on the Buttonwood Street bridge, a stolen purse (taken from a woman as she was getting off the bus), a burglary at GNA which included a smashed window, and a burglary at Sweet Surprises. He noted that the individual who stole the purse was apprehended, and the woman who burglarized Sweet Surprises was arrested. (A warrant went out for the male who has since been arrested.)
 - Chief Fabriziani has considered utilizing a blotter to provide more information in an

attempt to keep residents and property owners informed about criminal activity. He said this could be accomplished by posting the blotter on the Borough website, however it would not provide investigative details because that information is not included under the Freedom of Information Act. He hoped that this could be in place by the next Council meeting.

- The Parking Enforcement vehicle has some issues according to PennDOT, and it will have to be decided if it will be cost effective to bring the vehicle into compliance. A report should be received by January as to whether it will be feasible. Other ideas have been discussed but nothing will be decided until the report has been received. Chief Fabrizio noted that electric vehicles such as the Parking Enforcement vehicle are legal in 46 states, and there is a bill pending in Harrisburg that will make the vehicle legal but there is no guarantee that it will be passed.

- Chief Fabrizio thanked Mrs. Heckler for decorating the Christmas Tree in the Police Department lobby. He noted that the Secretary for the department has been swamped so Mrs. Heckler's assistance was very much appreciated.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Police Chief's Report.

Motion carried.

- c. Public Works – Mr. Murray offered his written report for discussion.

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Public Works Director's Report. **Motion carried.**

- d.. Fire Department – Chief Burkholder commented that November was the busiest month since he's been Chief.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Fire Chief's Report.

Motion carried.

- e. Elm Street – Mr. Rohrbach noted five items that required action by Council, noting that these are all items that have been discussed in the past:

- **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the special Borough Council Public Meeting minutes from December 5th. (Mr. Conrad and Ms. Good-Ashman abstained because they were not in attendance for the meeting.) **Motion carried.**

- **Moved** by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve Resolution 2011-17 "A Resolution of the Borough of West Reading Authorizing Setting Aside Funds to Administer the West Reading Elm Street Program from 2012 – 2016", with the contingency that the state grant is awarded. **Motion carried.**

- **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve Resolution 2011-16, "A Resolution of the Borough of West Reading Authorizing the Filing of a Proposal for Funds with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Commonwealth of Pennsylvania". **Motion carried.**

- **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to enter into the Cooperation Agreement with the West Reading Main Street Authority. **Motion carried.**

- Mr. Rohrbach also announced that they were the recipient of a state wide award "The Best Visual Impact Award" from Pittsburg Paints for the 'Let's Paint the Town' program last September. He noted that a check presentation will be held on January 4th. He thanked Amber Rambo for her assistance with the program.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Elm Street Manager's Report. **Motion carried.**

10. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. Recreation Commission – Ms. Klahr reported that the 83rd annual Christmas Tree Lighting had been a very successful event with more than 350 people in attendance, and 150 people visited Saint James Church afterward. She noted that Saint James Church has agreed to host the same event next year.

A game and craft night was held at the BiCentennial House which was very well attended and very successful as well. Ms. Klahr thanked that Mrs. Heckler and all the Rec Commission members who helped out.

The holiday decorating contest was also very successful with more homes than ever being decorated for the holidays. Winners were:

Best Decorated Overall – The Bollingers on Chestnut Street
Most houses decorated – 15 on the 300 block of Sunset Road
Most houses 2nd place – 14 on the 200 block of Chestnut Street
Best Door for Resident – Stu McDonough of the 300 block of Pine Street
Best Door 2nd place – The Evans home on Oak Terrace
Best Employee Overall & Best Door - Chad Moyer of Pine Street
Best Door (Employee) 2nd place - Rich Sichler of Pine Street
Best Door (Employee) 3rd place - Nathalie Kulesa of Sunset Road

A new category was created for Best Homemade Decorations which was awarded to 313 Sunset Road for the gigantic handmade candles that were made from styrofoam, garland and lights. Ms. Klahr noted that there were so many entries in the white light and colored light category that deserved to win that the judges decided that each will receive a 'thank you for decorating' letter.

Ms. Klahr also thanked the judges – Nathalie Kulesa, Elizabeth Heckler, Karen Livingood and Bev Gilbert.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to approve the Recreation Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

- b. Planning Commission – There were no questions pertaining to the Planning Commission minutes of December 7th.

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the Planning Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

- c. Environmental Advisory Council – There were no questions pertaining to the November 28th minutes.

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the Environmental Advisory Council Report. **Motion carried.**

- d. Safety Committee – There were no questions concerning the November 29th minutes.
Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Safety Committee Report.
Motion carried.
- 11. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**
 - a. **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Revenue Report for the 11 months ending 11/30/2011. **Motion carried.**
 - b. **Moved** by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve Payment Approval Report for 11/16/2011-12/16/2011 and 12/17/2011-12/20/2011. **Motion carried.**
- 12. **NEW BUSINESS:**
There was no new business.
- 13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
An Executive Session was not held.
- 14. **ADJOURNMENT:**
Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant