

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAY 20, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at West Reading Borough Hall on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 with the following persons present: Council President Nathalie Kulesa; Council Vice-President Michael Doyle; Council Members Kevin Conrad, James Gallen Jr., Michael Geddio Michael Morrill, Philip Wert; Mayor Shane Keller; Borough Manager George Tindall; Borough Solicitor Socrates Georgeadis; Police Chief Ed Fabriziani; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Code Enforcement Officer Gerald Trate, Borough Foreman Jim Beane; Recreation Coordinator Daphne Klahr; Main Street Executive Director Nevin Hollinger; Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach; Administrative Assistant Cathy Hoffman.

VISITORS: Ruth Cardell – 728 Reading Avenue
Rebecca Keller – 395 Oak Terrace
Barbara Ciervo – 304 Reading Avenue
Robert DiSands – 528 Penn Avenue
Will Gernert – 107 N. Third Avenue
Bonnie Batdorf – 384 Oak Terrace
Don Haines – 156B West Fulton Street
Sheila Scott – 322 Chestnut Street
Elizabeth Heckler – 460 Chestnut Street
Amber Rambo – 307 Sunset Road
Darryl Jenkins – Great Valley Consultants

Council President Nathalie Kulesa called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Deacon William Kase of Sacred Heart Church gave the invocation which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

Mrs. Kulesa reported that an Executive Session had been held between 6:35 and 7:00 p.m. to discuss an ongoing investigation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mrs. Barbara Ciervo of 304 Reading Avenue spoke about the property at the corner of N. 4th Avenue and Reading Avenue. She said that the property has been in a state of disrepair for many years and said she can't understand why nothing can be done about it.

Mr. Tindall responded that a building permit has been issued for specific work to be completed within one year which will address the concrete floor in the basement, the concrete deck/porch, new pillars on the porch and repairs to the porch fascia and roof. Several items were completed from a previous building permit, but not all in the specified time frame.

Chief Fabriziani stated that he would look at the situation again from the standpoint of a habitual offender, and Mr. Georgeadis stated that he would look at it as well and report back to Council.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:

Mr. Tindall stated that there was a typographic error on page 5; that the hourly rate for Mr. Banta should be \$7.15 and not \$7.14 as stated in the minutes. **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Council minutes of April 15th 2008, as amended.**

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:

2007 Audit Report - Mr. Tindall stated that the Finance Committee had reviewed the Audit Report just prior to the Council meeting. He introduced Larry Shaub from Reinsel Kuntz Lesher who was in attendance. Mr. Morrill read a portion of the audit report which states that the Borough doesn't conform to generally accepted accounting practices. Mr. Morrill noted that there is nothing untoward happening, but that the recommendations made by the auditors are never implemented, particularly with regard to the segregation of duties. Mr. Tindall stated that as a result of the audit report, the Finance Committee has made some recommendations. Mr. Shaub explained by stating that none of the recommendations made affected their ability to issue an opinion on the report and that it is a segregation and control issue only. All of the tests that were required were completed, but there is an issue with report format. Mr. Shaub stated that the 'Gasby 34' report format is recommended but not mandatory and has not been used primarily because there is an additional cost. Mr. Morrill asked him to check into the additional cost for next year's audit.

On motion duly made by Mr. Geddio, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council accepted the financial breakdown as presented along with the Audit communications, with the intent that Council considers the recommendations more seriously than has been done in the past. Mr. Morrill requested that the Finance Committee review the issues well before the beginning of the next fiscal year so that the recommendations are ready for Council to adopt.

Appointment to Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing – Mr. Tindall stated that both candidates were in attendance and ready for Council's questions. Mr. Robert DiSands of 528 Penn Avenue stated that he has been a resident of the Borough for three years and has a strong background in budgeting, finance and marketing that he feels would make him a good board member of the JMA. When asked, he stated that he would be able to attend Authority meetings and would be ready and available to make reports to Council, as requested. He also noted that he was very interested in working with the Borough on a volunteer basis.

Mr. William Gernert of 107 North Third Avenue stated that he has lived in the Borough for 10 years and has been self employed in the plumbing/heating field for 26 years. He said that he also has a strong financial background as part of running his own business. When asked, he also stated that he would have no scheduling difficulties for attending meetings and would make himself available to report to Council when asked.

A motion was made by Mr. Geddio with Mr. Doyle seconding to appoint Mr. DiSands to the JMA, however the motion failed (4 to 3) with Mr. Wert, Mr. Morrill, Mr. Conrad and Mrs. Kulesa voting no. Mrs. Kulesa noted that her vote was no simply because Mr. Gernert has more experience in that field.

On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council unanimously approved the appointment of William Gernert to the JMA.

Mr. Conrad asked if there were any other areas in which Mr. DiSands abilities could be utilized, if he were interested in doing so. **On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Morrill and passed, Council approved the appointment of Robert DiSands to the Recreation Commission.**

2009 Community Development Block Grant for ADA Ramps – Mr. Tindall stated that he had received information from the Berks County Community Development office regarding grants for 2009 and recommended that the Borough install more ADA ramps. He requested approval to submit the application for the \$50,000 grant. Some discussion ensued about the ramps throughout the Borough and Mr. Jenkins said that he could provide a document to Council that shows where ramps are currently located, where there are needed etc. It was also noted that 20 to 25 ramps could be installed for the

\$50,000 that could possibly be received. **On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Morrill and passed, Council approved the submission of the application for the Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$50,000 for ADA ramps.**

Basement Retaining Wall at Pool House – Mr. Tindall requested approval to advertise the replacement of the retaining wall and stairs at the pool house. He noted that this work had been advertised in the past along with other work but it had been decided not to go ahead with the entire project. For this project, the stone wall will be removed and a poured concrete wall will be installed and tied into the stairs. **On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the advertising for the replacement of the retaining wall and stairs at the pool house.** It was noted that this was for the advertising of the project only, and not to accept bids.

Code Enforcement Secretary – Mr. Tindall told Council that Ms. Moyer, who had been approved at the last Council meeting for Codes Secretary, had declined the position therefore the second choice was offered the position and had accepted and has been working out well so far. **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council ratified the appointment of Sandy McEwen as Code Enforcement Secretary.**

East Brunswick Township Sewage Sludge Ordinance – Mr. Morrill told Council that although the issue of sewage sludge doesn't pertain to West Reading, he felt that Council should support the ordinance on principle. He stated that the current trend is to take away authority from municipalities, therefore adopting the resolution will be reinforcing their ability to govern themselves. Mr. Morrill moved to adopt the resolution, however Mr. Doyle said he didn't know the circumstances surrounding the resolution therefore he wouldn't support it. **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council voted 5-2 to adopt the sample resolution and submit it to the Attorney General.** Voting "no" were Mr. Doyle and Mr. Conrad.

Authorize Hiring of Summer Seasonal Maintenance – Mr. Tindall stated that interviews were conducted for summer seasonal employees, and recommended the hiring of Corey L'Esperance and Nick Stoner at a rate of \$7.50 per hour and returning employee Eric Fitterling at a rate of \$8.50 per hour. It was noted that there is \$10,000 allocated in the budget for this purpose. **On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the hiring of the three summer seasonal workers.**

Borough Vehicles – Mr. Tindall informed Council that the newest police vehicle had arrived and therefore requested the following reallocating of vehicles:

- the Intrepid (former Police vehicle) will become the Borough Manager's vehicle
- the Durango (former Borough Manager's vehicle) will then go to the Codes Department
- the Blazer (formerly Codes) will go to the Fire Department
- the Fire Department sedan will go to auction

Mr. Tindall stated that the auction would be held on June 8th at the Exeter Township Community Building. It was noted that the new police vehicle will not be put into service for approximately four weeks as it still requires installation of radios and West Reading Police Department insignia, therefore the Blazer would not go to the Fire Department until that time. Chief Burkholder said that it wouldn't be a problem. **On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council approved the reallocation of Borough vehicles.**

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the Borough Manager's Report.

ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Second Avenue Reconstruction - Application for Payment No. 3 (Final): Mr. Jenkins recommended final payment to Grace Industries Inc in the amount of \$10,761.28 for the completion of the Second Avenue Reconstruction project. **On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved payment to Grace Industries Inc in the amount of \$10,761.28.**

Mr. Wert asked Mr. Jenkins if the Belovich Group had installed signs at The Villas development yet and Mr. Jenkins said he did contact them and will call them again. There was some discussion regarding the installation of temporary stop signs, however it was noted that the streets in question are still private roads and have not been turned over to the Borough. Chief Fabriziani also noted that the state vehicle code states that vehicles must yield at secondary roads before entering primary roads.

Main Street – Phases 4 and 5: Mr. Jenkins told Council that Phases 4 and 5 of the Main Street project have finally been advertised and that bids will be opened on June 11th at 10 a.m. Mr. Tindall added that a pre-bid meeting would be held on May 29th at 10 a.m. to provide information to those who are interested in submitting bids to the Borough.

Parkview Road Bridge

Mr. Jenkins stated that he has provided the Borough with a letter summarizing various options for the bridge, ranging from simply closing the bridge with signage to completely removing the bridge. He said that the letter addresses technical issues only.

Mr. Conrad stated that the issue had been discussed at length at the last Traffic meeting. He stated that the recommendation coming from the Committee is as follows: "That Council draft a letter to the County Commissioners requesting the release of funds from the liquid fuel fund for the purpose of the removal of the bridge, (excepting the abutments), including all necessary permitting and signage to then close it safely; and upon the County Commissioners' willingness and agreement to do so, the Borough will then accept ownership of the bridge."

Mr. Georgeadis asked if Mr. Jenkins could provide PENNDOT publication 203, which details their bridge closing regulations. Much discussion ensued regarding removing the sidewalk and curbing, the increase in traffic on Museum Road and subsequent increase in traffic on Sunset, Pine, Sycamore etc, the possibility of milling the bridge deck to see damage beneath it, and asking the County for funds to assist the Borough to take steps to resolve the issue. It was noted that the bridge is not immediately dangerous, but will become dangerous if it continues to deteriorate.

It was decided that Mr. Tindall and Mr. Jenkins should meet informally with the County to see if funds are available to mill the bridge surface to investigate the condition of the substructure, and if the remainder of funds are still available.

On motion duly made by Mr. Geddio, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Engineer's Report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT:

Mr. Trate announced that Assistant Code Enforcement Officer Tracey Levering has successfully passed the Building Code Official testing and is now a certified L&I Building Code Official.

Mr. Trate stated that his department is requesting that Council consider amending the Property Maintenance Code to require address numbers at the rear of the property, in addition to the current section that requires numbers at the front of the property. **On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council authorized Mr. Georgeadis to prepare the ordinance.**

On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council approved the Code Enforcement Officer's Report.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Georgeadis stated that the Western Berks Water Authority has requested a third supplemental service agreement with the Boroughs of West Reading, Shillington and Wyomissing which will allow the Authority to borrow funds through commercial banks, which they are unable to do now because of being restricted to the bond market. He noted that the other boroughs have already signed the agreement, and that it will only be of benefit to the Borough of West Reading because it will allow the Authority to borrow funds at lower rates.

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council approved the signing of the Third Supplemental Service Agreement for the Western Berks Water Authority.

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Solicitor's Report.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:

Traffic Committee – Mr. Conrad reported that the Traffic Committee had received a request from Diller Jewelers for 2 hour parking on Penn Avenue on Saturdays. He noted that neither the Traffic Committee nor the Main Street Authority are in favor of this request. Discussion followed regarding the parking situation on Penn Avenue and it was noted that while some businesses may request a change, not all owners are in agreement, therefore these type of changes should be granted only when requested by Main Street.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Traffic Committee report.

Recreation Commission – Daphne Klahr, Recreation Coordinator stated that due to the lack of a quorum, the May recreation meeting had not been held, therefore she had prepared a written report. She noted that there are five people recommended for hiring. **On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the hiring of five employees at the rates listed in the Recreation report.**

Ms. Klahr told Council that the Berks County Open Space and Recreation Grant has funds available, and she therefore requested permission to apply for the grant, which will be used to install outdoor fitness equipment for children. She noted that the equipment would be installed at the West Reading Playground, adjacent to the pool. It was noted that the grant requires a 50% match, but that 25% of that amount can be in kind. Ms. Klahr stated that the grant recipients will be announced in September, therefore Council can decide at that time if they wish to proceed and budget the necessary funds for 2009.

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council authorized Ms. Klahr to apply for the Berks County Open Space and Recreation Grant for 2009.

Ms. Klahr also reported the following:

- Wyomissing has requested that the Borough participate in the 4th of July parade again this year. Chief Burkholder gave permission to use the bay at the Fire Company to refurbish the float, which Ms. Klahr says will cost about \$200 in materials.
- The temperature of the pool water is so low that it could cause hypothermia in small children, therefore Ms. Klahr requested that the pool not open for the Memorial Day weekend. After some discussion, it was determined that the pool should open as planned.
- Tricia Ganster has requested to be reappointed to the Recreation Commission because she is not moving from the Borough as was previously planned. **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the reappointment of Tricia Ganster to the Recreation Commission.**

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the Recreation Commission report.

Safety Committee – Mr. Tindall stated that there was no written report for the May 16th training session. **On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Safety Committee minutes of April 30th 2008.**

Shade Tree Commission – Mr. Tindall informed Council that the Commission discussed the Cherry trees on N. Third Avenue which he had originally wished to remove because they are a maintenance headache, however after Becca Keller surveyed the trees, only three actually need to be removed. He said that the trees will be replaced with pear trees. Council asked that the residents be notified before the trees are removed. **On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Morrill and passed, Council approved the Shade Tree Commission report.**

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Fabrizio presented his report to Council and noted that the second phase of the Smooth Operator program has been completed successfully and two more phases are being planned for June and August. Chief Fabrizio stated that the program has been working very well and those in charge of the program are very pleased considering this is the first year that West Reading has participated in the program.

Chief Fabrizio also noted that Officer Nick Karetas is requesting reimbursement for tuition in the amount of \$2000, which is under Section 17 of the current contract, contingent upon receiving a passing grade for his courses in criminal risk analysis at Penn State (Berks Campus). **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Doyle and passed, Council approved the reimbursement, as requested.**

On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Police Chief's Report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Keller reviewed the following items:

- The school playground at 5th and Chestnut has been closed since Labor Day 2007, however the school has now requested its reopening each afternoon and evening. He noted that our Officers will patrol the area regularly, will be checking ID's and if an individual is not a school district resident, they will be asked to leave. The playground will also be locked up at dusk each evening.

- The traffic trailer has been inoperable due to a circuit board problem, however it has been repaired under warranty and will be back on the street soon.
- The Farmers' Market opens June 1st at 9 a.m. on the 500 block of Penn Avenue.
- The vote for the Act 1 Referendum for the school is scheduled for July 1st.

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the Mayor's Report.

BOROUGH FOREMAN'S REPORT:

Borough Foreman Jim Beane informed Council of the following:

- The Olive Street Pump Station motor has been repaired and is back in service at a cost of \$3619.53.
- DEP personnel performed the annual water system inspection on April 29th and were pleased overall. Recommendations were made (primarily housekeeping issues), which are currently being worked on.
- The large pool is up and running with the new chlorinator on-line. He noted that the chlorinators are temperature sensitive and are sluggish under 65°; the diving well is up and running with no leaks; the baby pool will be running by Wednesday.
- The BiCi's pumping station was not operating properly but has since been repaired in-house. Cost will be approximately \$400. The Borough of Wyomissing's vac truck was utilized to pump out the well so access could be gained to the pump.

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the Borough Foreman's Report.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Chief Burkholder presented his report to Council. Mr. Doyle asked about the transmission repair and Chief Burkholder stated that it was actually the transmission brake which wasn't operating properly – cost of the repair will be approximately \$800.

On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Doyle, and passed, Council approved the Fire Chief's Report.

MAIN STREET EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Nevin Hollinger reported that \$7000 has been received for marketing and promotion for the Farmers' Market, which will assist with special events and activities throughout the summer. As well, tentative approval has been received for a \$30,000 Facade Improvement grant which is funded through the Department of Community and Economic Development. Final approval should be received within the next two to three weeks. Mr. Hollinger also highlighted the Art on the Avenue event which will be held on June 21st. He added that this year's event will require the closing of three blocks of Penn Avenue.

Mr. Hollinger asked Council's permission to approve a resolution that indicates Council's support of the Main Street Program in general terms. He stated that he has been preparing various applications which many times asks for a copy of a resolution showing the Borough's support and where such a resolution does not exist, Mr. Hollinger distributed a resolution to Council that he had prepared with Dan Becker.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Doyle and passed, Council approved Resolution 2008-2, a Resolution of the West Reading Borough Council in support of the West Reading Main Street Program with a 6-1 vote (Mr. Gallen voted no).

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council approved the Main Street Executive Director's Report.

ELM STREET MANAGER'S REPORT:

Mr. Rohrbach told Council that in addition to his written report, two of the Elm Street programs (Home Ownership and Property Rehab) are out of funds. Funds for the Façade Improvement program should be available by next month but confirmation is pending from Harrisburg.

Mr. Rohrbach also reported that three other projects should be completed within the next two weeks – the Community Garden project, neighborhood signs, and the Tool Lending Project. He provided an example of the signs for the neighborhood which are in accordance with PennDot standards.

As a final note, Mr. Rohrbach told Council that about \$73,000 was left over from the South Second Avenue project, which are the funds that he is hoping to get permission from Harrisburg to use for the Façade Improvement program. Once those funds have been expended, Elm Street can then apply for another Residential Reinvestment Grant (\$250,000) which will be used between the Home Ownership Program and the Property Rehab Program. He stated that this grant will require a 10% match, which Ken Pick has agreed to provide through the County's Affordable Housing Program.

On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Doyle and passed, Council approved the Elm Street Manager's Report.

REVENUES WITH COMPARISON TO BUDGET – ENDING 4/30/08:

On motion duly made by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Revenues Report for the four months ending 4/30/08.

PAYMENT APPROVAL REPORT - 4/15/08 TO 5/19/08:

On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Doyle and passed, Council approved the Payment Approval Report for 4/15/08 to 5/19/08.

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion duly made by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed, Council adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant

Approved by George I. Tindall
Borough Manager/Secretary