

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

May 20, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Wednesday, May 20, 2015 with the following persons present: Council President Philip C. Wert; Vice President Carl G. Garman; Council Members Elizabeth L. Heckler, Nathalie R. Kulesa, Christopher C. Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson; Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr.; Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler; Police Chief Stephen D. Powell; Fire Chief Mark D. Burkholder; Borough Solicitor Daniel P. Becker; Recreation Coordinator Helen Moyer; Public Works Director Dean E. Murray; Elm Street Manager Dean L. Rohrbach; Main Street Manager Christin Kelley; Administrative Assistant Cathy L. Hoffman. Council Member Grace M. Craze was unable to attend, and Engineer Tom Unger arrived later in the meeting.

VISITORS:	Karen Livingood	Residents
	Robin Horman	Resident
	Andy Moletress	Resident
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Audrey Schaeffer	Resident
	Sheila Yasher	Visitor
	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Keith Fox	Resident
	Reporter	Reading Eagle

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Philip C. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

James T. Rogers requested that open dialogue with Council be permitted during the meeting and Mr. Wert said he would entertain it at his discretion.

Sheila Yasher asked for an update concerning 417 Franklin and Mr. Sichler said that he continues to check on the property. Ms. Yasher reported that the front door is ajar even though it is padlocked and the pile of wood and a tarp still remains at the rear of the property from last October. Mr. Sichler said it would be taken care of. It was also noted that there has been no water in the basement of the adjacent property.

3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Garman to approve the minutes of April 21st, 2015. **Motion carried.**

4. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS TO BE ADOPTED:**

- a. **Ordinance 1046 – Parking Amendments** – The ordinance was approved for advertising at the last meeting and is ready to be enacted. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve Ordinance 1046. **Motion carried.**

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Belovich Development** – Mr. Becker reported that the engineers continue to work together to get the outstanding punch list items completed. Once finished, the process for dedication can begin.
- b. **Abandoned Properties** – Mr. Sichler indicated that he had made a quick visual re-inspection of the three abandoned properties from the outside and everything appears to be intact. He said they

have been collecting information from Codes to submit to the County for possible inclusion as a blighted property under their new regulations.

- c. **WRCRF Cooperation Agreement** – Mr. Sichler stated that the CRF has not met and therefore nothing to report.
- d. **Recycling Grant** – Mr. Sichler said that the agreement was executed per Council's authorization in April and has been submitted. Once it is received from the State, a plan to purchase the grant-funded items will be drafted.
- e. **Finance Committee** – A draft ordinance for the Finance Committee was distributed. Some discussion ensued with a recommendation being made that the number of members be set at five (three residents and two Council members). Mrs. Kulesa had previously committed to serving on the committee but stated that she did not have the time necessary to devote to the committee and therefore asked to be removed. Ms. Thompson asked to take the vacant seat. It was also suggested that once the committee has reviewed the document, Mr. Becker should also review it.

6. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker said that he had nothing further to discuss.
- b. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger had not yet arrived therefore his report was presented later in the meeting.

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

- a. **ReadingBridges.net – Buttonwood Bridge Detour Meeting**
The ReadingBridges.net website was set up by an ad hoc committee chaired by Gail Landis (Chamber of Commerce) and Berks County Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt. An information meeting has already been held with the businesses in the Borough and now they wish to schedule a public meeting for the residents at the Fire House if possible. Discussion ensued about the upcoming bridge work and street detours. Chief Burkholder agreed to let them use the Fire Company for the meeting therefore it was **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to grant permission to the ReadingBridges.net group to use the Fire House for a public meeting.
Motion carried.
- b. **Berks County Blighted Property Review Committee**
The Committee is eager to find programs to assist the Borough with the blighted properties within the Borough, and are reviewing the information that has been collected so far.
- c. **Hail Repair Contracts – Borough Hall and Fire Company**
Mr. Unger is finishing the first two contracts for the repair work for the Hall and the Fire Company. The bids must be advertised because it is anticipated that both will be more than \$18,000. Mr. Sichler requested permission to advertise both projects for bid and noted that the specifications have already been put together. The recreation buildings will also need repair which will require bid packages as well. **Moved** by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to authorize the Borough Manager to advertise the bids for hail damage for Borough Hall and the Fire Company, to be opened at or prior to the next Council meeting per the advertising requirements. **Motion carried.**

d. **Tree Contracts – Trimming and Removal and Shade Tree Commission Report**

Much tree work is required this year and Mr. Sichler requested permission to advertise two contracts; one for the removal of trees and one for the trimming of trees. He noted the following:

- The Shade Tree Commission discussed all of the work that needs to be done and a list of all of the work to be completed is reviewed.
- There are three Oak trees to come down near Oak Terrace at a cost of \$2000 - \$3000 each which includes the removal and stump grinding. This will not need to be advertised but three written quotes will be obtained.
- Two trees have already been taken down in the pool area.
- Certified Arborists are used to do any of the trimming in order to ensure that they are trimmed correctly and do not suffer as a result.

With regard to the Shade Tree report, Mr. Sichler said that municipal stormwater regulations require improvements to be made that will benefit the Wyomissing Creek and earn credit toward the Borough's MS4 stormwater permit. After consulting with the Shade Tree Commission, Environmental Advisory Committee and Wyomissing Creek Watershed Coalition, it is their recommendation to plant Shagbark Hickory trees along the creek, adjacent to the new wall at the pool. There is also room for more species therefore Shade Tree has recommended Pawpaw trees also be planted. It has been suggested that anyone in the community may sponsor a tree to offset the \$50 cost per tree. Mr. Sichler noted that there is no concern about tree roots damaging the wall.

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Shade Tree report. **Motion carried.**

e. **Tree/Sidewalk Considerations – Minimum Sidewalk Width**

Borough regulations currently require a sidewalk width of 5 feet however it could be reduced with the approval of Borough Council in order to accommodate street trees. Mr. Sichler recommended that the ordinance be amended to permit the Codes Department to approve a sidewalk replacement permit when it requires an adjustment in width (up to a certain measurement as determined by Council). Mr. Sichler will prepare a draft ordinance amendment.

f. **Fence Waiver Agreement – 399 Oak Terrace**

The residents at 399 Oak Terrace would like to place a fence one foot off of the sidewalk, which would place it in the Borough's right-of-way. All neighboring properties currently have fences that are located on the right-of-way because they were constructed prior to the Borough requiring permits. Mr. Sichler provided a copy of an agreement which would allow the fence to be installed, however with the understanding that if the fence had to come down to allow work in the right-of-way, the utility company involved would not restore the fence. **Moved** by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to authorize Mr. Sichler to enter into the agreement. **Motion carried.**

g. **Pension Committee Vacancies**

Mr. Sichler noted that there are vacancies on both the Police Pension and Non-Uniform Pension Committees. Mr. Garman volunteered to sit on one of the Committees and Mr. Sichler said he would post a notice on the website as well.

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

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT & WEST READING COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FOUNDATION:**

Mayor Rodriguez provided information concerning the following:

- Met with State Representative Mark Rozzi as well as the Berks County Commissioners concerning the Norfolk Southern bridge that crosses Buttonwood Street. The bridge is in dilapidated condition and it is hoped that Norfolk Southern will make the necessary repairs while the street is closed for the Buttonwood Street Bridge repairs.
- Met for a West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation strategic planning session with the Pennsylvania Downtown Center to review policies, procedures etc.
- Held a swearing-in for a new Fire Police officer.
- Attended the regular meetings for the Economic Development Committee, Traffic and Infrastructure Committees, as well as the Codes Department staff meetings.
- Participated in the 2nd Annual 'Bike to Work Week' Ride. As a result of this event, two police bicycles have been donated to the Borough from the Reading Hospital and will be formally presented on May 28th at 10:00 a.m.
- Participated in the 67th Annual Armed Forces Day Parade.
- Will be attending the reopening of Bistro 614 at the ribbon cutting ceremony on May 21st at 6:00 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Mayor's Report. **Motion carried.**

9. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell said he had nothing to add to his written report but noted that an addendum had been distributed to the Mayor and Council.

It was noted that with the donation of two new police bicycles, one of the older bikes will be given to Main Street for their use. Mayor Rodriguez thanked Officers Matt Nguyen and Ed DeLozier for participating in the bike ride and for providing security.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the Police Department Report. **Motion carried.**

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray had nothing to add to his written report. The following was discussed:

- Mayor Rodriguez thanked Mr. Murray for providing a tour of the pool area and facilities.
- Mr. Fox asked about pothole repairs on Cherry Street.
- Testing and certifications were discussed with regard to the pool and the handling of chemicals. It was decided that this will be discussed further, later.
- Part-time summer workers were discussed as well as the shortage of full time staff. Mr. Murray said he would be bringing the issue up again at budget time.
- Mrs. Livingood expressed her concern about the footbridge by the pool. Mr. Murray said the rotted boards will soon be replaced however they intend to refurbish the entire bridge next year.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Public Works Director's Report. **Motion carried.**

- c. **Fire Department** – In addition to his written report, Chief Burkholder referred to the ISO report that was included with his report. He noted that the best rating that can be achieved is 1 and West Reading received a rating of 4 which is a good rating considering that the department is entirely volunteer. He stated that the rating could be improved if full time people were hired, or if additional stand-by apparatus were available. Training was rated well, however performing inspections would increase it further. It was noted that as the ISO rating increases, fire insurance premiums decrease.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Fire Chief's Report. **Motion carried.**

- d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation**
Elm Street and Main Street Manager' Report – Mr. Rohrbach had nothing to add to his written report, however Mrs. Kulesa thanked him for allocating one of the community garden plots to the summer playground program. It was also noted that the PARR house at 3 Grape Street is complete and currently on the market. He offered tours of the property to anyone on Council who would like to see it.

Ms. Kelley referred to her written report and noted that the WRCRF would be meeting on Thursday, May 28th at 7:00 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Garman approve the Elm Street and Main Street Manager's Report. **Motion carried.**

Engineer/Code Enforcement Report – Mr. Unger reported concerning the following:

- The retaining wall project is basically complete with some final touch ups required for topsoil and seeding. Pictures have been included in his report.
- He will be meeting with the engineer for the Belovich property to review the remaining punch list items.
- The final payment application for the Kent Way water line replacement has been presented for payment. This is the retainage amount that was held from 2014 until the reseeding was complete. Mr. Garman said he had received a complaint from a resident concerning the poor quality of the seeding that was done.
- Requested permission to advertise the Oak Terrace water line replacement project. The project includes replacing the water line with an 8" line, and replacing the road paving from curb line to curb line. It does not include curb replacement, sidewalks or trees. An additional line item for the looping of the water line through the alley will be proposed but will depend upon pricing. This proposed project includes the repaving of the alley behind S. Third that runs between Pine and Spruce Streets and will connect the water line that currently dead ends at the Oak Terrace cul-de-sac to the water line on Spruce Street.
- Two road paving contracts will be put out for bid; Chestnut/Wayne from 5th to Lakeview and the west end of the 600 block of Franklin Street along the curb line.
- Contracts and specifications are being prepared to repair the hail damage at the Fire Company and Borough Hall.
- Grease trap letters and applications have been sent out. About one quarter of the inspections have been completed so far.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the final payment application to A. H. Moyer in the amount of \$2,746.27 contingent upon the satisfactory resolution of the reseeding issue. **Motion carried**

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to advertise for bids for the Oak Terrace Water Line Replacement Project. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to advertise to receive bids for the Road Paving Projects for Franklin Street and Chestnut/Wayne streets. **Motion carried.** It was noted that these contracts will be broken down into various components to make it easier to determine which projects will be completed, depending on the pricing received.

There was some question as to who is responsible for the broken camera line near the pool. The line wasn't marked before digging began because the contractor was not expected to be digging in that area. They did however need to excavate when their trucks were sinking in the soil. The cost is not exorbitant however the Borough will continue to request the contractor to pay.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Engineer's Report and Code Enforcement Report. **Motion carried.**

10. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer referred to her written report and Recreation minutes and noted that there are three action items including the following:
- Mrs. Kulesa thanked Public Works and the Fire Department for their assistance with the Father/Daughter Dance. She added that the junior firefighters that were there were a great help with the teardown after the event.
 - Permission was requested to enter into a contract for a slushie machine and nacho cheese machine which are provided at no cost to the Borough other than to purchase the product from that particular company. Mr. Becker said he had reviewed the contract and had a couple of suggestions, such as an end date for the contract and the inclusion of model numbers for the equipment. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Thompson to enter into a contract with Lebanon United Jobbers Inc. for a slushie machine and nacho cheese dispensing machine contingent upon some minor modifications to the contract. **Motion carried.**
 - **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the hiring of Lindsey McDonough and Jared Long as lifeguards at a rate of \$7.25 per hour. **Motion carried.**
 - Mrs. Moyer noted that since starting at the Borough, she has raised over \$16,800 in donations.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Garman to approve the Recreation Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert noted that there was an error in the minutes concerning the time frame of when the parking study data was collected. He then reported that representatives from Walker Parking had been in attendance to discuss the parking study with those in attendance. He noted that the study will be discussed further at the next Traffic Committee meeting. Also discussed at the May meeting was the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance update. The first draft was reviewed with regard to the changes that have already been implemented by Mr. Heilman of SDE, Inc.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Planning Commission minutes, as amended. **Motion carried.**

- c. **Environmental Advisory Committee** – Mr. Wert noted that there was an error in the minutes – the next meeting will be held on May 26th. There was no further discussion regarding the report.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to accept the Environmental Advisory Committee minutes as amended. **Motion carried.**

- d. **Economic Development Committee** – There were two sets of minutes, April 13th and May 11th and Mr. Wert noted that the Committee continues to identify significant properties in the Borough. Mr. Lincoln is creating an inventory of the square footages of all business on Penn Avenue to assist with finding the appropriate property for potential business owners. Mr. Wert also noted that he and Main Street Manager Christin Kelley had been given a tour of the former A to Z building on Penn Avenue along with Ken Pick of Berks County Redevelopment. Discussion ensued regarding the uniqueness of the building and the potential for redevelopment.

Mr. Wert stated that regarding an appointment to the Committee, a letter of interest had been received from Aaron Gantz, who is the Marketing Manager for the Greater Reading Economic Partnership and lives in Wyomissing. It was noted that her appointment was recommended by the Committee. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to appoint Ms. Gantz to the Committee.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Garman to approve the minutes of April 13th and May 11th. **Motion carried.**

- e. **Safety Committee** – There were no questions concerning the minutes.
Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Safety Committee minutes.
Motion carried.
- f. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committees** – Mr. Lincoln noted that this was the first time that the Committees had met since November 2014. The Traffic Committee will be reviewing the parking study in depth over the next few months and will be making some recommendations to Council. They will also be looking at preparing a 5 year plan for infrastructure to assist during the budgeting process. There were two errors in the Traffic minutes; 1) the date on page 1 was incorrect and 2) page 3 referred to the Work Zone Traffic Control Manager which is a program that will not be implemented for several years.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure minutes as amended. **Motion carried.**

11. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Revenues with Comparison to Budget:**

Mr. Garman asked about a possible change to the Main Street budget, given the discussions that had transpired previously. Mr. Sichler said that at the July meeting he will be providing some mid-term budget adjustments which would be a good time to incorporate that change.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget Report for the four months ending 4/30/2015. **Motion carried.**

b. **Payment Approval Report:**

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve Payment Approval Report for 4/22/2015 - 5/14/2015 and 5/15/2015 – 5/21/2015. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Wert noted that neither he nor Mr. Lincoln would be available for the June meeting if it were held on the regular date of June 16th. After some discussion, it was decided to hold the June meeting on the 2nd scheduled meeting date which is June 23rd. With the exception of Mrs. Kulesa, all Council members present indicated that they would be able to attend on that date.

12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to Executive Session at 9:13 p.m. to discuss personnel and ongoing litigation. When the meeting reconvened at 9:31 p.m., no action was taken.

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Amber Rambo asked Mr. Unger about 'block by block' inspections of homes and Mr. Unger noted that exterior inspections are being completed now with warnings and citations being issued as necessary however he was not aware of any block by block inspections. He said he would discuss it at their next department meeting to ensure that things are being done as they have been in the past.

James T. Rogers spoke about the installation of concrete sidewalk in the past that had not been done correctly. Mr. Garman said that the ordinance references a specific PSI that must be met when constructing sidewalks and it was noted that this will be discussed by the Planning Commission as part of their review of the UCC.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant