

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

**June 15, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 with the following persons present: Council President Jack Gombach; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Patrick Kaag, Samantha Kaag, Jennifer Bressler, and Ryan Lineaweaver; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Police Sergeant Ryan Phillips; Interim Borough Manager & Public Works Director Dean Murray; Code Department Manager Cathy Hoffman; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Engineer Tom Unger; Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliffe; Incoming Police Chief Glenn Granitz; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln was unable to attend.

**VISITORS:** (In attendance via Zoom Meeting)

Karen Livingood, Resident  
Zachary Shaver, Resident

Denise Drobnick, Resident  
James Rogers, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Jack Gombach called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. via Zoom, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call. A moment of silence was requested to honor those lost due to COVID-19 both locally and beyond.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**  
There were no public comments.
3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**  
Motion to approve the May 19, 2021 regular meeting minutes, the May 25, 2021 second meeting minutes, and the June 7, 2021 special meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**
4. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**
  - a. **Resolution 2021-9 Fixing Charges for Industrial Waste** – These fees are set annually by the Joint Municipal Authority and are effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.  
  
Motion to approve Resolution 2021-9 Fixing Charges for Industrial Waste. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**
  - b. **Resolution 2021-10 Extension of Local Disaster Emergency** – Revisions to the Resolution are needed to be in line with the Senate’s decision to end the pandemic emergency declaration.  
  
Motion to approve Resolution 2021-10 Extension of Local Disaster Emergency through June 29, 2021. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**  
  
Ms. Kaag clarified that public meetings would return to in-person meetings beginning next month.
5. **CONSULTANT’S REPORT:**
  - a. **Solicitor’s Report** – Mr. Becker stated that he had nothing new to report that is not otherwise covered on the agenda.
  - b. **Engineer’s Report** – Mr. Unger commented on the following:

- **2021 Road Project** – Mr. Unger reported that bids were received last week and were received in two different methods. The base bid tabulation results were:

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Total Base Bid</b>
Construction Masters Services, LLC	\$221,946.70
H&K Group, Inc.	\$193,607.31

The total base bid tabulation results with alternate bid items were:

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Total Base Bid with Alternate</b>
Construction Masters Services, LLC	\$246,061.70
H&K Group, Inc.	\$313,538.14

The base bid tabulation includes removal of the curb that has been marked as damaged and in need of replacement, there is a total of 440 linear feet of curbing that has been identified. These bid tabulations also include ninety-five isolated joint curbing repairs, the existing concrete gutter would remain. The roadway would be milled to a depth of two-inches and replaced with two-inch wearing course.

The alternate bid tabulations would replace all curbing, except where recently improved, or a total of 1,400 linear feet. This option would remove the existing concrete gutter. A decision would be needed by Council as to which option they would prefer to pursue.

Mr. Murray recommended the base bid option for cost saving purposes and reported that these bids have come in lower than the amount budgeted for this project.

Motion to accept the 2021 Annual Road Project bids as received on June 9, 2021.

**Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to award the base bid of \$193,607.31 to H&K Group, Inc. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Parkview Road Pedestrian Bridge** – The pre-construction meeting was held and this project is slated to begin in July.
- **2021 Sanitary Sewer Replacement Project** – The pre-construction meeting was held today and the project will proceed once materials are received.

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Mr. Gombach noted an executive session that was held at 6:00 p.m. this evening to discuss personnel and contract matters.
7. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Mr. Gombach provided an update on the recent dog incident and the steps Council is taking to address this issue. Councilman Wert is working with staff to amend our ordinance to ban tethers for unattended animals in an effort to prevent this

type of incident from occurring in the future. The amendment should be fairly simple and the hope is to have an amendment adopted within sixty-days.

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

- a. **AT&T Small Cell Lease Agreement** – Mr. Murray noted that the details of this agreement are being finalized by the Solicitor.
- b. **COVID-19 ARPA Local Recovery Funds** – Mr. Murray and Mrs. Rentschler have filed an application for relief funding. Approximately \$450,000 should be received during a two-year period to recoup costs associated with the pandemic or to offset future project costs.

- c. **Street Closure Requests** – Mr. Murray noted the following street closure requests:

- **400 Block of Elm Street** – This request is for a community block party to be held on Sunday, July 4, 2021 with a rain date of Monday, July 5, 2021.

Motion to approve the closure of Elm Street from Tulpehocken Avenue to Olive Street on Sunday, July 4, 2021 or Monday, July 5, 2021 as an alternate rain date.

**Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **South Sixth Avenue** – This request is for the French Fry Fest to be held on Saturday, August 14, 2021 with a rain date of Saturday, August 21, 2021.

Motion to approve the closure of South Sixth Avenue from Penn Avenue to Franklin Street on Saturday, August 14, 2021 or Saturday, August 21, 2021 as an alternate rain date. **Moved** by Mr. Lineaweaver and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Recreation Coordinator** – Mr. Murray noted that he is working on filling this position.
- e. **Turnkey Taxes** – Mr. Murray provided an update to the sharing of data with Turnkey Taxes and hopes to see progress in the near future.
- f. **Fire Police Assistance** – Mr. Murray shared a request from Bern Township for the Borough to accept responsibility of workers' compensation coverage while Bern Township Fire Police Officers provide assistance during the Art on the Avenue event on June 19, 2021. Mr. Becker states under Borough Code municipalities have the right to agree to assistance in supplying fire or fire police services. Mr. Becker would like to discuss aspects of this simple agreement with Mr. Murray prior to the execution of the agreement.

Motion to approve the Fire Police Services agreement with Bern Township for the Art on the Avenue event of June 19, 2021 contingent upon solicitor comments. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Safety Windows** – Mr. Murray reported that safety glass windows will be installed tomorrow at the Administration and Police Department windows.
- h. **Concerts in the Park** – Mr. Murray requested Council's approval of the following dates to host Concerts in the Park with a fenced in beer garden between the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.:
  - Sunday, June 20, 2021
  - Sunday, July 18, 2021
  - Sunday, August 15, 2021

- Sunday, September 19, 2021
- Sunday, October 3, 2021 as a rain date

Motion to approve the 2021 Concert in the Park dates of June 20<sup>th</sup>, July 18<sup>th</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup>, September 19<sup>th</sup> and October 3<sup>rd</sup> as an alternate rain date. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- Police Chief** – Mr. Murray requested a motion to authorize the execution of an employment contract with Glenn Granitz, Jr. as Chief of Police contingent upon Mr. Granitz's acceptance of the contract. Mr. Becker noted that Chief Granitz is on the call tonight and that he has been a pleasure to work with and indicated that Council has made a good selection.

Motion to authorize execution of an employment contract between West Reading Borough and Police Chief Glenn Granitz, Jr. contingent upon Mr. Granitz's acceptance of the contract. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lineaweaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

#### 9. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Kearney noted that a list of weddings he has officiated to date has been submitted to the Borough Secretary should anyone wish to view this information.

Secondly, Mayor Kearney noted his work with WEEU and a request he received to fill advertising time slots. Mayor Kearney played a recording of an advertisement that runs three times per day where he promotes Penn Avenue stores, restaurants, breweries, murals, and the Farmers' Market.

Mayor Kearney noted difficulties in the past for vendors to vacate Penn Avenue in a timely manner. Therefore, Mayor Kearney has assembled a group of fifteen volunteers that will begin at 6:30 p.m. to help vendors pack and direct them off the Avenue to be able to open Penn Avenue as soon as possible.

Lastly, Mayor Kearney noted that he will swear in Glenn Granitz, Jr. as Chief of Police at 7:00 a.m. on the morning of June 28, 2021.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

#### 10. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- Police Department** – Officer-in-Charge Ryan Phillips reported that Dean Murray has been doing an outstanding job as Interim Borough Manager and thanked him for his efforts.

Secondly Sergeant Phillips expressed his appreciation for the Mayor's advertisement on WEEU radio.

Lastly, Sergeant Phillips congratulated Chief Granitz and noted a mutual excitement to bringing him on board.

Mr. Gombach expressed his appreciation of Sergeant Phillips' efforts as Officer in Charge during the pandemic, and thanked him on behalf of all Council members.

Sergeant Phillips offered to answer any questions regarding the Police Department report. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Murray expressed an appreciation of road crew members that are stepping up to the plate while the department is short staffed. Mr. Murray also noted the recent approval of a fleet inspection station at the Borough Garage with the exception of CDL vehicles. It is hoped that in the future operations could expand to include CDL vehicles.

Mr. Wert inquired as to the status of spraying for lantern flies. Mr. Murray indicated that this has not yet happened and the importance of spraying during the nymph stage, and noted that he will stay on top of this.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – In the absence of Chief Moyer Mr. Murray offered to answer any questions regarding the fire report. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lineaweaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Code Department** – Mrs. Hoffman offered to answer any questions regarding her report. Mr. Kaag noted fifty high grass violations issued this past month.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Ratcliffe asked Council to check out the exciting new branding. It is vibrant, clean, young, fresh and has a good tag line: “Be your West Self”.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

#### 11. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – In Mrs. Moyer’s absence Mr. Murray requested permission to approve the following seasonal lifeguard hires:

- Samantha Latshaw at \$9.50/hour
- Jenna Gruber at \$9.50/hour
- Mary Henefer at \$9.25/hour
- Jada Stambaugh at \$9.25/hour

Motion to approve the list of seasonal lifeguard hires as stated. **Moved** by Mr. Lineaweaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Recreation Director’s report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – The June Planning Commission meeting was cancelled.
- c. **Economic Development Committee** – The June Economic Development Committee meeting was cancelled.

- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Kaag referred to the minutes and noted discussions regarding the spring cleanup event where an estimated 450 pounds of trash was collected. He also noted Mr. Keller’s efforts in researching alternative energy sources and green spaces within the Borough.

Motion to accept the Environmental Advisory Council report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – In Mr. Lincoln’s absence Mr. Kaag noted the review of potential parking ordinance revisions. Mr. Wert requested clarification on the Court Street parking revision discussions wondering if this would be an internal discussion or if a consultant would be needed. He reported that the WRRCRF office building has been damaged on four occasions during a four-year period by delivery vehicles. Mr. Kaag indicated that it is presently an internal discussion, should a consultant be needed, this guidance will be pursued.
- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – Mr. Kaag noted the removal of a large Oak tree that split near the pavilion and two trees near the new Pickleball courts as requested by the developer. The developer has agreed to cover the expense of the removal of these two trees and the planting of new trees. Also, the Open Tree Map App is being updated with tree additions and removals for better use in the future.

Motion to approve the Shade Tree Commission report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Lineaweaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray referred to the report and offered to answer any questions. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- h. **Animal Control Services** – Mr. Gombach requested feedback from the Police Department as to the recent dog incident and the performance of Safety Net Sanctuary whom is contracted to handle these services for the Borough. Sergeant Phillips noted difficulty in the past in making contact with a representative and their unwillingness to transport animals. As far as this recent incident, messages were left with Safety Net Sanctuary and to date the call has not been returned.

Mr. Becker noted the broadness of the Safety Net Sanctuary contract and their limited responsibility for rabid or hostile animal tendencies. Failure to respond within twenty-four hours would be a breach of contract and the Borough could pursue reimbursement of the remaining year service fees. The Animal Rescue League (ARL) has a new Executive Director and is now offering a full-service contract at \$2 per capita, or a full-service contract without transportation, with the exception of emergencies, at \$1 per capita, a feral cat contract at \$0.50 per capita, and an emergency hoarding contract that is \$250 depending on the condition of the animal. The ARL has expressed a willingness to enter into a pro rata contract with the Borough for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Wert expressed his dissatisfaction with the current animal control service provider and a desire to pursue an agreement with the Animal Rescue League for the remainder of the year.

The ARL has demonstrated a more professional manner in how they conduct their affairs and uphold their contracts.

Mrs. Bressler does not have faith in the current animal control service provider to meet the needs of the Borough for the remainder of the year and requested a copy of the ARL contract for review.

Mr. Murray noted a conversation with the owner of Safety Net Sanctuary and her notation of having a full-time job. After review of the contract, Mr. Murray was unsure that Safety Net Sanctuary would have rendered any service in that type of situation. It was noted that this type of agreement may not be suitable for a dense urban setting such as West Reading.

Mr. Becker listed a number of services that would be provided by the ARL under the \$2 per capita full-service animal control contract:

- Transport and animal holding services for stray animals.
- Enforcement of dog laws with state certified Humane Law Officers.
- Priority access to shelter space.
- Community cat Trap, Neuter, and Release (TNR).
- Hoarding case management.
- Community access to reduced price microchip, vaccine, or spay/neuter clinics.

The only difference to the limited-service animal control contract of \$1 per capita would include all of the above with the exception of limited transportation.

It was noted that the ARL did help in the recent challenging situation and provided recommendations. This recent incident has opened our eyes as to the importance of having a higher caliber animal control service provider.

Mr. Kaag urged the changing of contracts and recommended the limited-service animal control contract, which would cost roughly \$2,150 for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Lineaweaver noted information contained within the ARL 2021 service proposal that would provide: animal holding services for stray animals regardless of behavior, medical capacity or status. Emergency overnight service, no extra charge for veterinary care, and limited emergency only transportation for aggressive or severely injured animals or by the request of a police officer, and they will pursue contact of the owner. The \$1 per capita contract would include transportation of aggressive or injured animals.

Mr. Becker recommended obtaining the services of an animal control service provider prior to ending the current contract.

Mr. Wert noted that the aggressive animal has returned to the Borough and an ordinance amendment will take some time to enact. The same circumstances could present itself again in the near future. Therefore, Mr. Murray will request contract language from the ARL to share with Council for consideration and possible action during the second June Council meeting scheduled next week.

## 12. TREASURER'S REPORT:

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 5/31/2021** – Mr. Kaag inquired as to 96% of the real estate taxes being collected by the end of May. Mrs. Rentschler confirmed that this is accurate.

Motion to accept the Financial Statement ending 5/31/2021. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Payment Approval Report 5/20/21 to 6/10/21 & 6/11/21 to 6/15/21** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the Payment Approval Reports of 5/20/21 to 6/10/21 & 6/11/21 to 6/15/21. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Proposed Budget Amendments** – Mrs. Rentschler reviewed the recommended revisions to the 2021 adopted budget in order to accommodate the Parkview Road Pedestrian Bridge project that had been budgeted in 2020 and not in 2021, and expenses associated with police tuition reimbursement.

Motion to approve the following 2021 Budget amendments:

Account #	Account Title & Description	2021 Adopted Budget	2021 Amended Budget
<b>Parkview Road Pedestrian Bridge</b>			
30-387-000	Capital Fund Donation from Private Sectors <i>UGI contribution of \$112,750 plus \$5,304 one day of crane rental</i>		\$118,054
31-438-000	Parkview Road Bridge <i>Dessco – Construct bridge \$85,415</i> <i>Contech – Bridge Materials \$68,150</i> <i>SDE – Engineering fees \$19,250</i>		\$172,815
	Cost of bridge for the Borough: \$54,761		
<b>Police College Tuition</b>			
01-410-470	Police Educational Investment <i>2011 CBA award for college tuition reimbursement</i>		\$12,000

**Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2021 Final Summary** – Final net refunding savings and new money summary figures were shared with Council now that the rate has been locked in for eleven-years. The new money portion is for the fire truck purchase and the upfront savings scenario are reflected on the summary.

Motion to accept the Treasurer’s report. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**13. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers asked if next week’s meeting would be held in person. Mr. Gombach indicated that next week’s Council meeting will be held via Zoom and that meetings would return to in person after June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Rogers asked for the total amount of real estate taxes that were collected and how does this compare to the normal fiscal year budget. Mrs. Rentschler reported the amount collected to date is \$1,178,186, which is 96% of the \$1,225,119 that had been budgeted.

Mr. Rogers made a recommendation for alterations to the Court Street and Sixth Avenue intersection to accommodate delivery vehicle access by removing parking in that vicinity and creating a one-way traffic pattern eastbound on Court Street. Although he noted that this would bring an increase to traffic exiting the difficult line of sight intersection from Sixth Avenue onto Reading Avenue should the Pocket Park be created on North Sixth Avenue near Penn Avenue.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary