

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

June 22, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its second monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, June 22, 2021 with the following persons present: Council President Jack Gombach; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Patrick Kaag, Samantha Kaag, Ryan Lineaweaver and Jennifer Bressler; Assistant Treasurer and Recreation Director Helen Moyer; Sergeant Ryan Phillips; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln and Mayor Andrew Kearney were unable to attend.

VISITORS: (In attendance via Zoom Meeting)

Zachary Shaver, Resident	Denise Drobnick, Resident
Karen Livingood, Resident	Carl Garman, Resident
Alexis Pagoulatos, Animal Rescue League	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Jack Gombach called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no public comments.
3. **RECREATION DIRECTOR POSITION:** Mrs. Moyer requested permission to hire Christine Boud as Recreation Director at \$17 per hour.

Motion to approve the hiring of Christine Boud as a full-time seasonal Recreation Director at a rate of \$17 per hour. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mrs. Moyer requested permission to post additional signs in the park area noting the ordinance section and fines associated with allowing dogs in the park area without a leash. Sergeant Phillips urged contact with his department while a dog is in the park area unrestrained and reported a low tolerance for these types of violations. Sergeant Phillips requested posting of signs at all entrances to the park area for ease of enforcement and prosecution. Borough Council recommended purchasing additional signage as needed to enforce this law.

4. **ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICE CONTRACT:**

Ms. Pagoulatos introduced herself and noted the Animal Rescue League (ARL) as the largest full service, 24/7, 365 day per year animal shelter in Berks County. They employ Humane Police Officers to cover services from animal holding to helping injured, aggressive, and suspected rabid animals as well as assisting police officers with humane law relevant investigations, and animal cruelty cases. The ARL has worked with the District Attorney's office in prosecuting civil cases. During the past two-years the ARL has grown to provide community resident assistance with low-cost clinic type services such as microchipping, spaying/neutering, and vaccinations. They provide emergency support services to assist people in crisis to help keep people with their pets, which could include food assistance, boarding, and low-cost veterinarian care.

Ms. Pagoulatos explained the main difference between the full-service and limited-service contracts being the level of transportation that is provided. The \$2 per capita contract would include transportation services for elderly, infirmed, or people without a vehicle. Otherwise, they ask everyone in non-emergency situations to bring the animals to the shelter. They will, at the discretion of a police officer, provide transportation services when requested.

Mrs. Bressler thanked Ms. Pagoulatos for taking the time to meet with Borough Council and asked if there were any promotional type tools that would help get the word out to residents of the services that are provided by the ARL. Ms. Pagoulatos indicated that they do have templates available and can provide materials for Facebook, website and postings at municipal buildings. She also recommended notifying police dispatch to ensure they provide the correct information. Ms. Pagoulatos reported that they do not care for wildlife animals and recommended contacting Red Creek Wildlife Center for these types of services.

Mr. Kaag made a recommendation to consider the full-service, \$2 per capita option to facilitate an ease in transportation related issues to address items such as feral cats. Ms. Pagoulatos offered clarification in that Berks County has a cat crisis, West Reading is not alone. FEMA estimates that there are 32,000 to 60,000 free roaming cats in Berks County. It will take all animal welfare organizations working together years to address spaying/neutering to bring the crisis under control. The ARL offers access to free spaying/neutering of feral cats, and will provide training and humane live traps for people to trap and transport feral cats to be spayed/neutered, microchipped for tracking purposes, and then returned to people for release the following day. Regarding the transportation aspect, the ARL will only transport emergency, aggressive or injured animal cases. Overall, the ARL asks people in non-emergency situations to transport the animals to their facility.

Ms. Pagoulatos departed the meeting to allow Council to speak privately and offered to answer any further questions via phone or email.

Council members discussed the pro-rated options that are available for the remainder of the year to test full-service or limited-service contract options. Education of residents would be needed as to the available animal control services provided by the ARL. Sergeant Phillips reported approximately 25-30 animal transports by the police department during the course of a normal year. Due to limited transportation services provided by the ARL even under the full-service contract Council agreed to the limited-service contract.

Motion to enter into a contract contingent upon solicitor approval with the Animal Rescue League of Berks County for the remainder of the year under the \$1 per capita Animal Control Services Agreement. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mrs. Livingood thanked Sergeant Phillips for the police presence during the Concerts in the Park event last weekend.

Mrs. Livingood shared her senior neighbor concerns regarding the recent dog attack in the park and asked if they would have any liability in carrying pepper spray or mace. Sergeant Phillips refrained from answering liability questions without the Borough Solicitor's guidance and reported that chemicals do not always affect animals in the same manner as humans and could potentially aggravate the animal further. If he were asked by his children if they should carry pepper spray for a dog, he would advise against it. Mrs. Livingood thanked Borough Council for their hard work.

6. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary