

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

July 21, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, July 21, 2015 with the following persons present: Vice President Carl G. Garman; Council Members Elizabeth L. Heckler, Grace M. Craze, Nathalie R. Kulesa, Christopher C. Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson; Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr.; Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler; Police Chief Stephen D. Powell; Deputy Fire Chief Chad Moyer; 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; Engineer Tom Unger; Administrative Assistant Cathy L. Hoffman. Council President Philip C. Wert was unable to attend.

VISITORS:	Jim & Karen Livingood	Residents
	Terry Siggins	Resident
	Tina Shenk	Property Owner
	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Reporter	Reading Eagle

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council Vice President Carl Garman 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 commented that in light of the new 'no left turns' on Penn Avenue, he felt that a sign should be placed on the traffic light overhead as well as on the ground. Chief Powell said he would request this from PennDOT.

Tina Shenk spoke about the bicycle race that is scheduled for September and will necessitate the shutdown of Penn Avenue for a short interval, and asked in what way this will benefit the Borough, particularly the businesses on the Avenue. Mayor Rodriguez also spoke about this and said that it was his intention to ask Council to reconsider their decision even though it had been conditionally approved at the June meeting. Ms. Thompson also asked that it be reconsidered, given that traffic in the Borough is already being disrupted with the Buttonwood Bridge closure. It was noted that the Borough has not yet submitted the letter to PennDOT authorizing the street closure for the race. There were many questions that could not be answered therefore it was decided that Mr. Sichler contact the race organizers to inform them that the Borough is reconsidering, but remain interested, however there are many concerns that need to be addressed; proof of insurance, demonstration of adequate police coverage, reimbursement for any expenses that may occur, address any complications that may be made worse by the existing detour, and information concerning economic benefit. They will be asked to meet again with the Borough at the second scheduled Council meeting on July 28th at 7:00 p.m.

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to have Mr. Sichler contact race officials and express Council's concerns with a request to meet on July 28th. **Motion carried.**

Terry Siggins asked about the various work being completed in the Borough by UGI, Met Ed etc. Discussion ensued concerning the 5 year street moratorium, as well as the Oak Terrace project that is currently being done. UGI has offered free hook-up to residents on Oak Terrace who wish to renew their service lines.

3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**
Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the minutes of June 23, 2015. **Motion carried.**

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

- a. **Ordinance 1047** – The proposed ordinance to prohibit left turns from southbound Fifth Avenue was not advertised in time to have Council vote on it at this meeting, therefore Mayor Rodriguez will issue a temporary order to allow the necessary signs to be erected. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to authorize the erection of the necessary signage on 5th at Cherry per the ordinance that will be considered at the August meeting however in the meantime, the Mayor will issue a temporary order. **Motion carried.**
- b. **Police Pension Ordinance for 2014** – Each year, by ordinance, the Borough must specify the Police Pension Plan members' contributions, however as a result of a recent audit of the Police Pension Fund, it was determined that the percentage for 2014 had not been set by ordinance. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to advertise the Police Pension Ordinance for 2014. **Motion carried.**

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Belovich Development** – There was nothing new to report as Fulton Bank has not been returning calls/emails etc. Mr. Becker said he would continue to reach out to the solicitor for the Bank.
- b. **Abandoned Properties** – There has been no change in status for the three abandoned properties, however it was suggested that 246 Chestnut Street might be dilapidated and require intervention by the Borough. Although no complaints have been received concerning the property, and no code violations exist, it was suggested that Mr. Sichler and Mr. Unger could make a sidewalk review of the property to determine if they need to proceed with an administrative warrant to take corrective action. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to authorize Mr. Sichler and Mr. Unger to make an exterior evaluation of the property at 246 Chestnut and take the necessary measures to secure the property. **Motion carried.**
- c. **WRCRF Cooperation Agreement** – Ms. Thompson indicated that she had reviewed all of the minutes and financial documents from the last 10 months concerning the agreement to ensure that there weren't any outstanding items. She reviewed the items that had been previously stipulated and discussion ensued concerning the requirement for financial reporting. Several documents had been submitted in the Council packet and after some discussion it was determined that the following documents should be submitted:
 1. Cash Balance Report
 2. Accounts Payable Report
 3. Profit/Loss Budget Report (including event detail)

The following was also noted:

- At the Foundation's last meeting, resident David Amato had been nominated as a member. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to confirm David Amato contingent upon proof of residency and upon verification that he is in good standing with the Borough (no outstanding water bills, code violations, etc). **Motion carried.**
- The WRCRF Treasurer will be obtaining a corporate credit card for all necessary purchases.
- The retroactive payment from the Borough will be made when the agreement is approved (given that we are currently in July and payment has not yet been made for 2015). An invoice has been generated but will not be paid until the agreement is complete.
- In-kind services were discussed and it was decided that Mr. Sichler will determine what the Borough expends at each event.

- In future, when a member is being brought forward for confirmation, Council would like the person to attend the Council meeting.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to release the funds to the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation. **Motion carried.**

- d. **Recycling Grant** – Mr. Sichler indicated that grant documentation is being finalized in Harrisburg and it should be received within the next two weeks. The funds have been allocated to the Borough and reimbursement forms will be completed. Council had previously approved the securing of a backhoe, and he said he would like to pay the bill. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to authorize the payment of the backhoe in the amount of \$100,644.40. **Motion carried.**
- e. **Finance Committee** – Mr. Sichler indicated that the Committee had reviewed some language in a proposed Ordinance, however they felt that it was unnecessary to adopt an actual ordinance. They felt that being appointed and meeting monthly within the parameters that they have set would be sufficient. They will be working with Public Works and the Infrastructure Committee as far as the budget and a Five Year Plan is concerned. It was suggested that the Committee meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Garman asked that Mr. Wert review this information before a decision is made and the meetings are advertised.

6. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker said that he had nothing further to report. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Solicitor's Report. **Motion carried.**
- b. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger reviewed the following:
- A final payment application has been presented for the Retaining Wall project in the amount of \$8443.95. It was noted that all outstanding issues have been resolved. Anything further will be dealt with as maintenance under the contract. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve Payment Application #2 to Miller Brothers Construction in the amount of \$8443.95. **Motion carried**
 - Two bids were received for the Street Paving Project with low bid being H & K Group (company name is Landis Deck) at \$547,398.50. Included in this price were curb plates for all trees at an amount of \$111,000. It is unlikely that all trees will need plates, therefore a more realistic number is \$55,000. The amount of \$479,000. was budgeted for the project therefore if the extra tree plates are deducted, and other modifications are made, the project will be on budget.
Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to accept the bids. **Motion carried.**
Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to award the 2015 Street Paving Project to H & K Group of Skippack. **Motion carried.**
Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to instruct Mr. Unger to manage the project to remain within the budgeted amount of \$479,000., and to discuss with Council any other necessary changes. **Motion carried.**
 - The Olive Street Pump Station project is complete with no remaining issues or punch list items at this time. Payment applications #1 has been received in the amount of \$63,900. It was noted that 10% retainage is being held, and a change order is expected for some items because there were some unexpected irregularities that became apparent as the project went along. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve Payment Application #1 in the amount of \$63,900. **Motion carried.** (Budgeted amount was \$93,000.)

- The Oak Terrace Water Line Replacement Project is underway and progressing well so far. The tie in at 5th Avenue has been completed.
- With regard to the Code Enforcement Department Report, Mr. Unger stated that 45 grease trap inspections were completed with an additional 4 vacant properties, 13 exempt and 2 currently outstanding. He noted that the project has been a big success and was long overdue.
- The Department is also looking for properties that had hail damage but have not taken any measures to remediate the damage.
- Grass violations are being dealt with as necessary.

Mr. Garman asked about the Code Enforcement presence on the streets, as well as the number of hours that staff are in the Borough overall. Some discussion ensued and it was noted that the street presence has improved with the signage on Code Department vehicles. It was also noted that there have been no issues and that things are going well throughout the department. Mayor Rodriguez also noted that he and Mr. Civitarese have spoken with landlords concerning trash containers.

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Thompson to accept the Engineer's Report. **Motion carried.**

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

- a. **The Barley Mow Beer Garden** - Mr. Sichler noted that The Barley Mow would like to have a tent for the Fall Festival, just as they had done at Art on the Avenue. Discussion ensued about the large number of drinking establishments present during these events. Ms. Kelley indicated that there will be a shift in the types and numbers of vendors at the next Art on the Avenue, but Fall Festival is less of a family event. It was also noted that it is up to each of the existing businesses that have liquor licenses to obtain authorization to sell alcohol outside whether it is a special license for outside dining or a special license for a specific event.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to authorize Mr. Sichler to send a letter to PLCB permitting The Barley Mow Beer Garden for Fall Festival subject to the same conditions that were imposed for Art on the Avenue. **Motion carried.**

- b. **PADOT – Winter Municipal Agreement** – Mr. Sichler indicated that the Agreement allows the Borough to plow Penn Avenue and be reimbursed by PennDOT in the amount of \$9097.20 for five years. The alternative is to allow PennDOT to plow Penn Avenue, however they have indicated that it would not be done until the highways are done. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to authorize the execution of the PADOT Winter Municipal Agreement.

For the motion – Mrs. Kulesa, Mr. Lincoln, Ms. Craze, Ms. Thompson, Mr. Garman
Against the motion – Mrs. Heckler

Motion carried.

- c. **BCCPC Rock Salt Bid** – Mr. Sichler requested authorization to participate in the Berks County Cooperative Purchasing Council rock salt bid. He noted that each year salt is procured under two contracts – the State and the BCCPC. This year it is being hosted by Spring Township and is a softer contract that does not require that any salt actually be purchased, depending on price. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to authorize the Borough Manager to submit a request to be included under this contract for up to 250 tons of salt. **Motion carried.**

- d. **Vehicle Sales** – Two of the surplus vehicles have been advertised for sale with the Auction having been closed on July 19th.
- **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to authorize the sale of a hail damaged 2007 Charger to Tom Gradowski of Norristown in the amount of \$5101. with a buyer premium of \$357.07 for a total of \$5458.07. **Motion carried.**
 - **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to authorize the sale of a hail damaged 1997 GMC 2500 pick-up truck with plow to Al McGrath of Milford, NJ in the amount of \$5000 with a buyer premium of \$350. For a total of \$5350. **Motion carried.**
- e. **Six Month Budget Review** – Mr. Sichler provided graphs showing the revenue numbers as of June 30th. He noted that everything is on or above budget. He specifically noted that the Business Privilege Tax which is \$50,000 above what is expected therefore he will contact EIT to see if it is related to the construction at the Hospital. Also of note is the water fund which is performing well, partly because of the Borough Crew finding and resolving leaks in the system. In the past, the unbilled water usage was at 25% whereas it is at about 4.5% currently.

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

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

Mayor Rodriguez was unable to sync his calendar in order to provide a report therefore he will provide it at a later date for distribution. He noted that he had attended all of the regular meetings he normally attends with the exception of Council due to illness. His report will be approved at the next meeting.

Mr. Unger was excused from the meeting at 9:08 p.m. He also noted that due to his scheduled vacation, his report for the August meeting would be handed out at the meeting, not with the Council packets.

9. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell spoke about the following;
- The Buttonwood Bridge detour is now in effect. He thanked the Fire Police for jumping in and assisting on Penn Avenue.
 - The ARLE grant has been executed. A date for the kick-off meeting has not yet been received.
 - A handicapped parking request has been received for the 400 block of Sunset Road. Because of the length of the street, additional spaces have been permitted mid-block in the past. It was also noted that these applications will only be processed twice per year, therefore Mrs. Hoffman will hold the applications until the appropriate time to bring it forward. The applicant will be advised of this.
 - Officer Jesse Stock has been sworn in and is in the process of being outfitted and qualifying for service with the Department. Council said they would like to meet him and requested that Officer Stock attend the next meeting.
 - Concerning the detour, Chief Powell noted that there will be a police presence at the intersections on Penn Avenue for the first few weeks, then again in September when school starts. As necessary, the Sheriff's Department and Borough Fire Police will be assisting. An amount in excess of \$50,000 has been initially allocated by the contractor to provide the extra coverage at those intersections.

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Police Department Report.
Motion carried.

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray referred to his written report and answered questions concerning the recent water main break and about grass cutting at the Park. It was suggested that it might be beneficial to contract out the grass cutting and Mr. Sichler said he would check into it further.

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

- c. **Fire Department** – Deputy Chief Chad Moyer was on hand to present Chief Burkholder's written report and the following was discussed:
- The flood lights on the ladder truck require repair which will be covered under warranty, however it will take extensive work to remove the ladder to make the repair. Ladder truck coverage while it is out of service will be provided under mutual aid.
 - The hail damage work was discussed. Mr. Sichler noted there was an issue with the RFP because of the Dryvit specifications therefore that aspect will be separated and re-advertised.
 - Shutting down Penn Avenue for the Fall Festival was also questioned and Mr. Sichler said that PennDOT has agreed to it as long as the closure didn't encompass any portion of the detour route. This means that the closure can begin at 5th Avenue. Deputy Chief Moyer indicated that the measures taken at Art on the Avenue to keep the hydrants and emergency lane open worked very well.

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Fire Department Report.
Motion carried.

- d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation**
Elm Street and Main Street Manager' Report – Mr. Rohrbach referred to his written report, and noted that a Public Meeting needs to be held as part of the \$250,000 grant application. He asked that it be held at 6:00 p.m. on August 18th, just prior to the Council meeting. The grant, if received will fund the streetscape improvements on S. 6th Avenue and the 400 block of Chestnut Street. Cost estimates have been received from Mr. Unger - \$251,000 for S. 6th Avenue and \$63,000 for Chestnut Street. He noted that the Reading Health System may be assisting by paying for the ADA ramps in the amount of \$30,000, and that the \$33,000 for engineering fees has already been received. That total of \$63,000 will offset the amount needed to complete Chestnut Street.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to advertise the Public Meeting for Tuesday, August 18th at 6:00 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Rohrbach also reported that PARR house #3 was sold at full price - \$91,000 which was purchased for \$32,000. This will greatly increase the comps in the area.

Ms. Kelley reported the following:

- Art on the Avenue went very well this year and vendors reported that their sales numbers were excellent. She thanked the Police Department, Fire Department and Borough Crew for their assistance.
- Fall Festival is scheduled for September 19th.
- The Penn Avenue vacant inventory is a large project that is involving the Board and will require time to complete. Volunteers will also be welcomed.

- The Love West Reading site does have a listing of available properties – residential and commercial. This is a step in the right direction, thanks to Neo Pangea's assistance in this regard.
- Discussion ensued about how the inventory of information should be displayed, updated, who should have access etc. This is a bigger discussion that will have to be decided at some point, but the information can continue to be gathered for now.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze approve the Elm Street and Main Street Managers' Reports and the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation Report. **Motion carried.**

10. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer referred to her written report and noted the following:
- She will be meeting with the Berks County Community Foundation to finalize the \$10,000 grant. This will help to offset the matching funds for the DCNR trail grant.
 - There is no up-to-date Emergency Action Plan for the Playground and Pool so after meeting with both Police and Fire Department Chiefs, a recommendation will be brought to Council for final approval. Chief Burkholder recommended that two fire pulls be located in the pool house (one by the front door and one in the chemical room).
 - Fireworks on the 4th of July was discussed and it was noted that there were many residents who were upset because the Borough didn't host them this year. It was felt that with all of the other fireworks displays scheduled in other areas, it wouldn't be cost effective to do so.
 - A line item for donations was discussed and the Treasurer will be making the necessary changes which will make it easier to track the amount of donations received each year.
 - A bicycle that was damaged while in the bicycle rack at the pool was discussed. It was noted that better measures need to be taken to ensure that accidents don't happen when Borough vehicles are backing up. This will be discussed further at the Safety Committee meeting.
 - Unauthorized vehicles are using the pool driveway to drop off swimmers, etc. More signage needs to be added at the top of the driveway indicating that only authorized vehicles are allowed.
 - The Facebook page is doing well with over 1600 viewers.
 - National Night Out will be held on August 4th at 5:00 p.m. at the Pool. This will be a free pool day for residents.
 - The vegetable garden that is being cared for by the playground children is doing very well and the children are learning a great deal as well as having fun.

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Recreation Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Lincoln reported that the Commission continues to work on the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and as well as reviewing the UCC permit requirements. Attached to the minutes was a list of repairs/installations that compares what the UCC requires and what the Borough requires as far as permitting is concerned. Planning Commission member Terry Siggins, who has been working on this project, was in attendance and briefly explained why some of the items definitely need to be changed.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Planning Commission minutes. **Motion carried.**

c. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committees** – Mr. Lincoln noted the following:

- A portion of the Traffic minutes dealt with a request by James T. Rogers to remove the 'school hours' parking restriction for three parking spaces on Grape Street. Mrs. Kulesa said that she strongly disagreed with this request and noted that the school requires parents who pick up their children by vehicle to use Grape Street as the drop off / pick up location. After further discussion, it was decided that the Traffic Committee will discuss this further.
- Mr. Lincoln noted that the Committee also discussed the Parking Study, the Buttonwood Street Bridge closure and the Five Year Plan for Infrastructure.
- Ms. Craze also asked if the street sweeping day could be changed for Sunset Road. She noted that it is a permit parking street as well as having restrictions in the alley on trash and recycling days. This has caused a hardship for residents that don't have off street parking. Mr. Murray noted that residents may park on the street as soon as the sweeper goes by and said that there isn't much that can be done because this situation exists in many areas of the Borough. This will be discussed further at the next Traffic meeting.
- Mayor Rodriguez noted that it was discussed that permit parking may be warranted in areas where local industry takes over street parking forcing residents to park a great distance from their homes. The possibility of creating more permit parking areas will be discussed further.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committees Reports. **Motion carried.**

d. **Environmental Advisory Committee** – Mr. Sichler stated that the Committee did not meet, however a letter of resignation has been received that requires action. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept Christin Kelley's resignation. **Motion carried.**

It was also noted that a letter of interest had been received from Community Garden Manager Cara Giagnocavo. After some discussion it was decided that the vacancy should be advertised on the website, Facebook, Love West Reading, etc. to determine if there is any other interest.

e. **Shade Tree Commission** – Mr. Sichler indicated that there are three large oak trees that need to be removed at Spruce & S. 4th and on Oak Terrace. Bids for the work will be received in the coming week. Also noted was a tree request that was received after the Shade Tree meeting therefore it wasn't on the approved list. The tree, which is on Linden Lane, was evaluated and the dead limbs will be removed.

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Shade Tree Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

f. **Economic Development Committee** – The minutes from the May and July meetings were in the Council packet. A meeting was not held in June. Mayor Rodriguez also noted that a motion had been put forward to recommend to Council that they consider a Borough LERTA for certain properties in the Borough that would provide an incentive for economic interest. The Committee will continue to discuss this issue.

There was also some discussion about the recent appointment to the Economic Development Committee. It was noted that information needs to be given to all Committee Chairs to ensure that all Committee vacancies are publicized through Borough media for 30 days before a vacancy is filled.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the minutes from the May and July meetings. **Motion carried.**

- g. **Safety Committee** – There were no questions concerning the minutes. Mr. Sichler noted that the Borough's safety consultant was on hand to provide the yearly training concerning the function of the Committee.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Safety Committee minutes. **Motion carried.**

11. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

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

There was a question concerning Minor Equipment Purchases seemingly being over budget. It was noted that because not everyone can have access to the accounting program due to the software licensing, they will have to find a way to get up-to-date line item information. Mr. Sichler will work on this.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget Report for the six months ending 6/30/2015. **Motion carried.**

b. **Payment Approval Report:**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve Payment Approval Report for 6/24/2015 - 7/16/2015 and 7/17/2015 – 7/21/2015. **Motion carried.**

12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to Executive Session at 10:39 p.m. to discuss personnel. When the meeting reconvened at 11:30 p.m., the following action was taken:

- **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to ratify the hiring of Kate Rentschler as an office assistant at a rate of \$10.00 per hour on an as needed basis. **Motion carried.**

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

James T. Rogers noted that there needs to be more directional signage at Delaney Circle. The Traffic Committee will be looking into this.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant