

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

June 21, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, June 21, 2022 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Denise Drobnick, and Zachary Shaver; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Chief of Police Wayne Holben; Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Code Department Manager Cathy Hoffman (via Zoom); Engineer Tom Unger; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Police Officer Nicholas Karetas (via Zoom); and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Vice President Philip Wert was unable to attend.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident	Zanna Leiendecker, Resident (via Zoom)
Maureen Hasty, Resident	Tina Shenk, Resident
Andrew Moletress, Resident	Kacie Rodriguez, Resident
Rafael Torres, Resident	Lance Parmer, Resident
Enrique Castro, Jr., Visitor	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Mr. Lineaweaver noted an executive session that was held at 6:00 p.m. this evening to discuss personnel matters that delayed the start of this meeting.

3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**

- Motion to amend the agenda to include a discussion on promoting Tracie Milbut to Office Supervisor with a \$2.00 per hour rate increase. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- Motion to authorize the Borough Manager to proceed as directed during executive session with regards to personnel matters. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

4. **VACANCY BOARD MEETING:**

A motion was made to recess the business meeting and open the public vacancy board meeting at 7:17 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Lineaweaver shared that the purpose of the Vacancy Board meeting, which consists of Borough Council members and Chairman Andrew Moletress who took his seat at the Council table, is to fill the vacant Tax Collector position. A single write-in candidate accepted this position but has failed to complete the onboarding tasks, and too much time has lapsed to allow Borough Council to appoint a Tax Collector.

Mr. Moletress performed Roll Call and noted receipt of a letter of interest to fill the Tax Collector position from Nathalie Kulesa whom had been previously appointed to fill this position.

Motion to petition the Court of Common Pleas to appoint Nathalie Kulesa as the West Reading Borough Tax Collector through December 31, 2025. **Moved** by Mr. Lineaweaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Becker indicated that he would draft a petition to be signed and delivered to the Court of Common Pleas.

Motion to adjourn the Vacancy Board meeting and reconvene the business meeting at 7:20 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers requested an update on the selection of a new business privilege tax collector. Mr. Murray reminded Mr. Rogers that a change in tax collectors would not take place until January 1 and noted that Berks Earned Income Tax has begun collecting taxes that are in arrears.

Mr. Rogers inquired as to special licensing requirements to sell Old Reading Beer during the Art on the Avenue event. Mr. Lineaweaver indicated that Sly Fox owns that license. Ms. Sherk reported that licenses and certificates of insurance had been provided to the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation prior to the event.

6. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the May 18, 2022 regular meeting minutes and the June 9, 2022 conditional use hearing and special meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Resolution 2022-7 Fee Schedule Amendment** – Mr. Murray noted proposed revisions to the code department fee schedule that were modified to cover present day expenses.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2022-7 Fee Schedule amendments to code department fees. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

8. **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 noted last month's approval of a Letter of Credit reduction for the Narrow Fabric Subdivision in the amount of \$49,047.24, this took into account the payment of \$15,000 that was previously received by the Borough for the fee-in-lieu of open space. A corrected motion to reduce the Letter of Credit by \$15,000 was requested. The remaining balance would remain unchanged at \$24,294.64.

Motion to approve a Letter of Credit reduction in the amount of \$34,047.24 for the Narrow Fabric Subdivision. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Unger noted receipt of Payment Application No. 2, which is the final payment application from Sewer Specialty Services Company, Inc. for the 2021 Sanitary Sewer Cleaning and Inspection project in the amount of \$7,635.78. The remaining balance of \$162.80 is for an unused portion of the project bid that had been based on linear footage.

Motion to approve the final Payment Application No. 2 to Sewer Specialty Services Company, Inc. in the amount of \$7,635.78 for the 2021 Sanitary Sewer Cleaning and Inspection project.

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

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Unger departed the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

9. COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- a. **Noise Nuisance** – Mr. Lineaweaver provided an update on attempts to abate the noise disturbances emanating from Riverfront Drive in the City of Reading. A meeting took place between members of Borough Council and City Council to discuss options to address these nuisances. Members of Borough Council have been invited to attend the City of Reading's meeting next Monday evening to hold a discussion during public comment.

Mayor Kaag noted additional attempts to communicate with Mayor Moran that have gone unanswered. However, Chief Holben has arranged a meeting with the City of Reading's Chief of Police to initiate discussions on how to deter these types of disturbances for both City of Reading and West Reading residents. Mayor Kaag is also attempting to arrange a meeting with Senator Judy Schwank.

Motion to accept the Council President's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

10. BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:

- a. **Intergovernmental Agreement with Reading Area Water Authority (RAWA)** – Mr. Murray recommended to solidify the current working relationship with RAWA by entering into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement to supplement necessary repair service support activities on an as needed basis.

Motion to enter into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement with Reading Area Water Authority to supplement necessary repair service support activities. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Telecommuting Policy** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to adopt a work-from-home policy as recommended by the Personnel Committee.

Motion to adopt the Telecommuting Policy. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **New Year's Eve Day Holiday** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to include New Year's Eve Day to the list of recognized holidays to resemble the Teamsters CBA as recommended by the Personnel Committee. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that non-uniform staff holidays match that of the Teamsters Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Motion to include New Year's Eve Day to the list of recognized holidays. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Economic Development Committee Resignation** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to accept a letter of resignation from the Economic Development Committee.

Motion to accept John Woodward's letter of resignation from the Economic Development Committee. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Planning Commission Appointment** – Mr. Murray noted receipt of a letter of interest from Zanna Leiendecker to become a member of the Planning Commission.

Ms. Leiendecker introduced herself noting that she, as recently as last week, moved back to West Reading. Ms. Leiendecker grew up in West Reading, graduated from Wyomissing Area School District, attended Penn State majoring in political science, and University of Pittsburgh School of Law. She recently obtained a work-from-home position with Discover Financial Services and would like to become more involved in her hometown community. Ms. Leiendecker recalled a time while growing up that West Reading was not an area her friends wanted to visit. She is impressed with the improvements that have been made over the years and would like to be a part of continuing this good work.

Motion to appoint Zanna Leiendecker to the Planning Commission with a term expiring on December 31, 2024. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Head Lifeguard Rate of Pay** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to retroactively adjust the head lifeguard's rate of pay from \$10.75 to \$11.75 per hour. The head lifeguard had been inadvertently assigned the standard lifeguard rate of pay.

Motion to approve the retroactive adjustment to the head lifeguard, Cynthia Sandoval's rate of pay from \$10.75 to \$11.75 per hour. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Personnel Matters** - Mr. Lineaweaver requested that authorization be given to the Borough Manager to proceed as directed during executive session.

Motion to authorize the Borough Manager to proceed as directed during executive session with regards to personnel matters. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

11. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Kaag referred to her report noting the following:

- **Refillable Goods Grand Opening** – The official grand opening of this business took place on May 27th. The business owners intend to join an Environmental Advisory Council meeting to discuss methods to implement and promote reusable/recyclable goods within the community.
- **Pride Flag Raising** – Mayor Kaag noted that the well-received and well attended flag raising ceremony held at Borough Hall on June 1st. She is hopeful that future Council members will allow this event to continue on an annual basis.
- **Rainbow Crawl** – Mayor Kaag reported a good turnout for this event with a number of businesses offering promotions as a show of their support.
- **Family Promise Walk** – Mayor Kaag thanked the Fire Department for bringing fire trucks to this event that provided positive interactions with families and youth that are experiencing homelessness.

- **West Reading-Sacramento Basketball Cultural Exchange 50th Anniversary** – Mayor Kaag noted her attendance to this anniversary celebration for a program founded and directed by Ed Kuhn. She enjoyed the experience and listening to numerous stories from some of the 500 players.
- **Chief of Police Swearing-In** – Mayor Kaag thanked everyone who attended the June 13th swearing-in ceremony of the new Chief of Police Wayne Holben.
- **Tower Health Resident Orientation** – Mayor Kaag noted her attendance to this event and the literature that was provided by the Avenues magazine and the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation to help familiarize new residents to their surroundings and a desire to create a pamphlet to inform residents of recycling/trash requirements. It was noted that the Art on the Avenue event was a popular event topic.
- **Community Yard Sale and Art on the Avenue Events** – Mayor Kaag noted a resident that was selling everything for \$1, which was interesting. The Art on the Avenue event was a success, in part due to the weather. An after-event meeting will be held to discuss any improvements that could be implemented during future events.
- **Police Department Meeting** – A meeting to review expectations of the new Chief had been held on June 20th.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

12. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Holben requested authorization for the Civil Service Commission to begin the process to establish a new list of potential patrol officer candidates to hire and a sergeant promotion.

Motion to authorize the Civil Service Commission to begin the process to establish a new list of potential patrol officer candidates to hire and a sergeant promotion. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Lineaweaver requested approval to promote Tracie Milbut to Office Supervisor with a \$2.00 per hour rate increase.

Motion to promote Tracie Milbut to Office Supervisor with a \$2.00 per hour rate increase. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mayor Kaag noted that Mrs. Milbut has been with the Borough for twenty-eight years and thought that it was time to provide her with a proper job title and wage.

Chief Holben noted receipt of an electric bicycle donated by Performance Toyota and the benefits this offers to patrol more areas.

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

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions regarding his report and requested consideration of financing options to purchase a mini-excavator. It was noted that funds would be available to purchase outright from the originally budgeted truck purchase, and

savings by performing concrete work in-house. It was thought that a short-term financing option would be most desirable.

Motion to approve the Costars contract financing of \$60,000 for a Kubota Mini-Excavator for a term of thirty-six months at a fixed rate of 2.22 percent. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his report and offered to answer any questions. Chief Moyer reported that zero bids had been received to purchase Rescue 64 as advertised by Brindle Mountain Fire Apparatus. It was noted that Rescue 64 is an odd sized rescue vehicle that had been converted from a former squad vehicle. Chief Moyer provided the following options on how to proceed:

- Extend the bid period for another thirty-days;
- List the vehicle on another platform such as Public Surplus;
- Try another brokerage firm;
- Use the vehicle as a water/sewer truck that would be better suited with onboard tools and sell the current water/sewer truck.

It was decided to not take any action at this time, and that it would be beneficial to hand the vehicle down to the Public Works Department. Action to transfer the use of the vehicle between departments will be revisited next month.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Code Department** – Mrs. Hoffman offered to answer questions regarding her report. There were no questions or comments.

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

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – In Mr. Ratcliffe's absence Mr. Murray offered to answer any questions. Mr. Lineaweaver noted from the report that there was a waiting list of vendors for the first time for the Art on the Avenue event, and a sidewalk sale is planned on Sunday, August 7th.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

13. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce** – Mrs. Bressler noted a meeting held on June 15, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. between herself, Ms. Drobnick and Enrique Castro to review and discuss non-discrimination ordinances of the City of Reading and their human relations commission, Phoenixville Borough and their human relations commission, and Royersford Borough and their human relations board.

Mrs. Bressler noted discussions surrounding the human rights campaign, criteria for scoring municipalities, and the PA Human Relations Commission, which covers discrimination in employment, housing, commercial property, education, and public accommodations.

The goal of the EDI Taskforce is to facilitate the adoption of a non-discrimination ordinance modeled after Phoenixville Borough's ordinance, pending review by Borough Council and the Solicitor. All members of Council are invited to review the draft ordinance and are encouraged to contribute towards the process.

Motion to accept the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Recreation Commission** – In Ms. Boud's absence Mr. Murray referred to the Recreation Director and Recreation Commission reports. Mr. Murray noted that the Concession Stand Manager and Assistant Manager will be leaving at the end of the month and requested consideration to hire the following seasonal summer recreation staff:

- Concession Stand Manager Mary Ricchiuti at \$12.50 per hour
- Concession Stand Assistant Manager Ariana Davis at \$10.50 per hour
- Playground Leader Genesis Languasco at \$9.00 per hour
- Front Desk Clerk Nayellis Rivera at \$9.00 per hour

Motion to approve the list of recreation seasonal staff hires as presented. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Ms. Drobnick reminded everyone of the 7:30 a.m. Friday morning meditation class at the Pavilion, noting that everyone is welcome to attend. Also, the second Saturday of the month is a community bike ride event that begins near Sly Fox. The first two attempts have been rained out; the next event is planned for July 9th.

Mr. Lineaweaver noted that July 12th is West Reading night at the Fightin Phils game, free tickets are available at Borough Hall.

Motion to approve the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – In Mr. Wert's absence Mr. Lincoln noted a discussion with the owner of 433 Penn Avenue regarding the recent Zoning Ordinance overlay amendment and additional opportunities to find interested developers to purchase this property. A lengthy discussion regarding the conditional use application for 401 Buttonwood Street and subsequent hearing that was held on June 9th was noted as well as ordinance discussions on rope lighting in commercial settings and regulation of the same.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – In Mr. Wert's absence Mr. Murray offered to answer any questions regarding the report. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Economic Development Committee report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The May 2022 Environmental Advisory Council meeting had been cancelled.
- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Lincoln noted general discussions regarding Penn Avenue infrastructure improvements by the Public Works Department. Discussions continued on the handicapped parking policy with plans to present a revised policy to Council in a few months. A section of the ordinance that prohibits parking at all times was reviewed with a tentative recommendation made to Council, there are additional items to be addressed by staff prior to bringing the recommendation forward to Council.

Mr. Lineaweaver inquired as to a determination on studying the traffic circle and/or permit parking. Mr. Lincoln noted a review of the traffic circle by the Borough Engineer to determine short-term safety improvements, this information should be available to review during the next Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting. The committee will need to define the scope of traffic study to be performed to determine a cost and how to fund the study.

Motion to accept the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – Mr. Kaag noted discussions regarding tree plantings planned in September, trimming, and removals.

Mr. Lincoln noted a number of newer tree plantings that are encroaching sidewalks. It was noted that tree trimming is recommended during the month of September.

Motion to accept the Shade Tree Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray offered to answer any questions regarding the report and noted a dog bite accident today while reading a water meter. The Public Works member is doing well.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

14. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 5/31/2022** – There were no questions or comments.
- c. **Payment Approval Report 5/19/22 to 6/17/22 & 6/18/22 to 6/21/22** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 5/31/2022, and Payment Approval Reports of 5/19/22 to 6/17/22 & 6/18/22 to 6/21/22. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

15. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers noted numerous parking violations throughout the Art on the Avenue event and Council's decision to refrain from charging to park during events. He recommended in fairness that the parking kiosks be bagged to avoid collecting fees from visitors that are unaware of the free parking timeframe. Mr. Rogers noted illegal parking within private parking lots such as Gage Personnel, All About Children, B-2 Bistro, Reading Hospital, Fortna, and Manor Care.

Ms. Shenk noted that a number of communities offer free parking during events or holidays.

Mr. Castro noted his attendance to the Art on the Avenue event and the ability to find a parking space. It was thought that free parking may encourage event attendance. Mr. Castro expressed his pleasure in working with members of the EDI Taskforce and requested that Council make the non-discrimination ordinance a priority. He has become familiar with our community and expressed the importance of enacting this type of ordinance. West Reading could set an example for other municipalities. He understands that there is a concern in establishing a human relations commission and recommended taking the time to establish and appoint appropriate members, and in the meantime to use the state's human relations commission.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary