

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

September 15, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, September 15, 2015 with the following persons present: Council President Philip C. Wert; Vice President Carl G. Garman; Council Members Grace M. Craze, Nathalie R. Kulesa, Christopher C. Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson; Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr.; Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler; Police Sgt. Ryan Phillips; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Borough Solicitor Daniel P. Becker; Recreation Director Helen Moyer; Public Works Director Dean E. Murray; Main Street Manager Christin Kelley; Engineer Tom Unger; Administrative Assistant Cathy L. Hoffman. Council Member Elizabeth L. Heckler and Elm Street Manager Dean L. Rohrbach were not in attendance.

VISITORS:	Jim & Karen Livingood	Residents
	Terry Siggins	Resident
	Tina Shenk	Property Owner
	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Regina Copeland	Resident
	Jeannette High	Resident
	Kim Mell	Resident
	Andy Moletress	Resident
	Audrey Schaeffer	Resident
	Sheila Yasher	Visitor
	David Amato	Resident
	Becca Gregg	Reading Eagle
	Robin Horman	Resident
	Heidi Reuter	Resident
	Kevin Barnhardt	Berks County Commissioner

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. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
Council recessed to Executive Session at 7:02 p.m. to discuss litigation. When the meeting reconvened at 7:14 p.m., no action was taken.
3. **TIM DALEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**
Mr. Daley was on hand to discuss the possibility of Habitat for Humanity developing the vacant lots off Tulpehocken Avenue. He spoke about how Habitat for Humanity mentors families so they can become home owners, what the initial requirements are and what they must do to eventually own a home. He also spoke about their success rate and why Habitat is interested in acquiring properties in West Reading. He also noted that discussions have been held with the Reading Health System concerning the possibility of becoming partners in this project. Mr. Wert encouraged him to continue his discussions with the Reading Health System.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
James T. Rogers asked for an update concerning his question at the last meeting about the bridge contractors paying Business Privilege Tax, Earned Income Tax, etc. Mr. Sichler said he would speak with Berks EIT concerning this.

Oswald Herbert complained about the parking spaces that were removed on N. 4th Avenue as a result of the bridge detour and stated that their removal causes an additional hazard because motorists are using the vacant spaces as a travel lane. He asked that a line be painted at the center of the street and that half of the spaces be reinstated. Mr. Wert said his request would be taken under advisement.

Andy Moletress spoke about the tree grates on Penn Avenue where the tree is missing, causing a tripping hazard. Mr. Murray said they would fill the hole to alleviate the hazard.

Regina Copeland complained about the parking issues on S. 2nd Avenue; motorcycles taking up an entire parking space, a vehicle for sale that has expired tags and large trucks parked on the street. Sgt. R. Phillips said that he would check for the vehicle with expired tags, however the other issues are not illegal.

Jeannette High complained about vehicles speeding on Kline Street and asked for portable speed bumps. This complaint was also reiterated by Kim Mell and David Amato. It was noted that a speed bump would not be permitted but Sgt. Phillips said he would watch the area.

5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the minutes of August 18, 2015 as amended (it erroneously listed Mr. Rogers as asking a question concerning the skateboard ordinance). **Motion carried.**

6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Belovich Development** – Mr. Unger reported that work is ongoing for the completion of the punch list and Mr. Becker indicated that the Bank's solicitor is preparing the deeds to correct the errors in the Plan. Discussion has also taken place concerning stormwater management.
- b. **Abandoned Properties** – Mr. Sichler indicated that documentation for the three abandoned properties has been provided to the County for consideration at their September meeting.
- c. **Finance Committee** – The Finance Committee has not yet met to discuss the proposed ordinance therefore Mr. Wert asked that they review it and prepare a recommendation for Council.
- d. **Zoning Hearing Board** – Mr. Sichler stated that there have been no volunteers for this vacancy. He explained what the ZHB does and the frequency of their meetings and Mr. Wert spoke about the importance of this Board and why it is necessary to have this vacancy filled.
- e. **Proposed Pension Ordinance** – Mr. Sichler explained what this change will mean for employees that are not police officers and noted that it has been approved by the Teamsters. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to advertise the proposed pension ordinance. **Motion carried.**
- f. **LERTA Ordinance** – Mr. Wert said that as a result of Commissioner Leinbach's presentation and the subsequent discussion at the last Council meeting, he and Mr. Becker had worked on the proposed ordinance by reviewing other municipalities' ordinances as well as State law and the County's resolution. He noted that if the Borough wishes to proceed, a Public Hearing will be required and he further explained what the LERTA will mean for the Borough and West Reading businesses. Much discussed ensued. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to advertise the proposed LERTA ordinance. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to schedule the Public Hearing regarding the advertising of the LERTA Ordinance, on October 20th at 6:30 p.m. **Motion carried.**

- g. **Rita Ditsky Sign Request** – Mr. Unger said that he had discussed this question with Department staff and it was noted that 90% of the review for a sign permit application is site specific to determine if the sign meets Borough regulations therefore the fee is necessary to cover those costs.

7. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker said that everything he needed to discuss has been covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- b. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger reviewed his written report which was included in Council's packet. He noted the following:
- He and Mr. Sichler met with both low bidders that submitted proposals for the Parkview Road Bridge project. The bidders will be revising their proposals based on items that Mr. Unger and Mr. Sichler feel can be reduced.
 - The road paving projects for Franklin, Wayne and the alley should be complete within the coming week.
 - Bids have been received for the hail damage at Borough Hall and the Fire Company, as follows:
 - Borough Hall (Contract A) – Ram Siding \$ 90,333.70
Tim Bayliff's Remodeling Inc. \$120,161.86It was noted that the Fire Company bid was \$1500 under the amount allocated by the insurance company, but Borough Hall was \$12,000 over their amount. Mr. Sichler said he will continue to negotiate with the insurance company.
Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the bids. **Motion carried.**
Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Garman to award Contract A to Ram Siding of Douglassville, not to exceed \$90,333.70. **Motion carried.**
 - Fire Company (Contract B) - Ram Siding \$ 85,941.19
Tim Bayliff's Remodeling Inc. \$103,976.00**Moved** by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to accept the bids. **Motion carried.**
Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Garman to award Contract B to Ram Siding of Douglassville, not to exceed \$85,941.19. **Motion carried.**
 - The Oak Terrace Water Line Replacement Project is ongoing with the digging being completed and paving beginning soon.
 - The Code Enforcement Department report is in the packet.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the Engineer's Report. **Motion carried.**

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

- a. **Recycling Grant** – Mr. Sichler said that documentation has been received confirming that the grant has been awarded. This will allow us to move forward with the purchase of recycling containers and it was suggested that pricing be obtained for containers with lids.
- b. **Ragnar Relay** – Relay organizers are requesting permission to run through the Borough however Mr. Sichler emphasized that they will not require any road closures or police presence because they will be acting as pedestrians. **Moved** by Mr. Garman and seconded by Ms. Craze to acknowledge the race, contingent upon the Certificate of Insurance naming the Borough as an additional insured. **Motion carried.**

- c. **MMO – Police and Non-Uniform Pension Plans** – The Minimum Municipal Obligation for 2016 for the Police Pension is \$197,361. and \$21,978. for the Non-Uniform Pension. Mr. Sichler indicated that this is done for budgeting purposes and that state aid is received to off-set this expense. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to accept the Minimum Municipal Obligation for the Non-Uniform Pension Fund in the amount of \$21, 978. **Motion carried.** **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to accept the Minimum Municipal Obligation for the Police Pension Fund in the amount of \$197,361. **Motion carried.**
- d. **Norfolk Southern Train Bridge** – Graffiti has been found on a train bridge in the Borough however in order to utilize the County's graffiti abatement program, an indemnification agreement must be signed with Norfolk Southern because it is on their property. It was noted that the agreement stipulates that protective measures must be taken therefore Norfolk Southern would seek reimbursement for flaggers. It was decided that Mr. Becker will review the agreement and Mr. Sichler will speak with Norfolk Southern concerning the cost for flaggers. Further action will be discussed at the next meeting.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the Borough Manager's Report. **Motion carried.**

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

Mayor Rodriguez referred to his written report that was distributed just prior to the Council meeting. He did make note that during the Reading 120 Bicycle Race, one of the Borough's Fire Police, Peter Goda, was injured while directing traffic and hospitalized.

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

10. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Sgt. Ryan Phillips was in attendance and referred to the Chief's written report that had been included in the Council packets. The following was discussed:
- There was a question concerning the security camera project and Mr. Sichler stated that it is a three part project which has begun with the installation of the hardware at Borough Hall. He added that authorization has been received from Met Ed to run the cable up to Penn Avenue. Unfortunately permission has not be received from PennDOT to install the cameras on the traffic signal arms because a new requirement specifies that an engineering study be performed to ensure that the traffic arms can support the added weight of the cameras. Information is being obtained from Telco and other sources to submit to PennDOT.
 - Sgt. Phillips also noted that probationary Officer Stock is in his third and final stage of training and should be in the regular rotation as a non-probationary officer by mid-October. He noted that Officer Stock is doing very well and is actually ahead of schedule with his training.
 - Mr. Garman thanked the Police Department for the radios for Crime Watch as well as the Fire Department for allowing them to store the radios at the Fire Company and the upgrade for the charging modules.
 - Mr. Garman also asked about the 45 minute closure of 4th Avenue during the Reading 120 Race which was only supposed to be 15 minutes. Sgt. Phillips stated that 4th Avenue was closed for that time frame because of the riders that were lagging behind and it was noted that this will cast a negative view on next year's race.

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

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray referred to his written report and answered a question concerning yard waste.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Public Works Director's Report.
Motion carried.

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Burkholder referred to his written report which was distributed just prior to the meeting. There were no questions.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Fire Department Report.
Motion carried.

- d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation**

Elm Street and Main Street Manager' Report – Ms. Kelley spoke on behalf of Mr. Rohrbach and herself concerning their report and noted the upcoming "Paint the Town" event as well as the Fall Festival.

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

11. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer referred to her written report and spoke about the following:

- Thanked the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments for their assistance with the "Tons of Trucks" event.
- Mentioned the two vacant seats on the Recreation Commission and requested permission to post the vacancies on the Recreation Facebook page.

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

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert spoke about the following:

- The review of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance is almost finished. A final draft will be reviewed at the October Planning meeting. It will then be sent to Mr. Becker's office for legal review.
- The Codification review is ongoing.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Planning Commission report.
Motion carried.

- c. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committees** – Mr. Lincoln spoke about the following:

- The parking spaces on Grape Street were discussed. Mr. Sichler observed traffic (both vehicular and pedestrian) at that location in the morning and afternoon. It was noted that children have to walk in the alley because of the trash bins that occupy the sidewalk on trash days therefore it is the recommendation of the Committee that the parking restrictions remain in place.
- The \$36,000 ARLE grant was awarded to update pedestrian signals on Penn Avenue however PennDOT requires that the signals are ADA accessible, which they are not currently. Mr. Lincoln will be looking into this further to determine what options are available.

- A policy for permit parking is being discussed.
- The Infrastructure Committee began a discussion concerning trees, sidewalks and curbs.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committees Report. **Motion carried.**

- d. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert reported that the Committee just met on September 14th therefore the minutes are not yet available.
- e. **Protection of Persons and Property Committee** – Mr. Garman said that the focus of the meeting was primarily to determine what the Committee should accomplish. The skateboard ordinance was discussed at length and it was recommended that the Borough continue to enforce the ordinances that are currently in place. They also decided that the Committee would not meet on a monthly basis, however another meeting has been scheduled for October.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Protection of Persons and Property Committee report. **Motion carried.**

12. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

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

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget Report for the eight months ending 8/31/2015. **Motion carried.**

b. **Payment Approval Report:**

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Payment Approval Report for 8/19/2015 - 9/09/2015 and 9/10/2015 – 9/15/2015. **Motion carried.**

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to Executive Session at 9:28 p.m. to discuss personnel, litigation and contracts. When the meeting reconvened at 10:47 p.m., the following action was taken:

- **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to authorize Mr. Sichler to execute the Healthcare Participation Agreement with the Teamsters. **Motion carried.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Oswald Herbert provided some information concerning taxation for businesses that had been brought up earlier by Mr. Rogers.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to adjourn the meeting at 10:49 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant