

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

**June 20, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, June 20, 2023 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Denise Drobnick, and Zachary Shaver; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Fire Chief and Building Code Department Manager Chad Moyer; Officer-in-Charge Chad Marks; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliffe (via Zoom); Police Officer Nicholas Karetas (via Zoom); Borough Manager Dean Murray; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Engineer Pamela Stevens; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

**VISITORS:**

Ty Gardner, Resident (via Zoom)

James Rogers, Resident

Anthony Tucci, Western Berks Ambulance

Tina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner

Suzanne Thompson, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**  
Mr. Lineaweaver noted an executive session held this evening at 6:00 p.m. to discuss personnel matters relating to the Chief of Police position. The subject of pending litigation with Tower Health tax appeal was not addressed this evening.
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**  
There were no amendments to the agenda.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**  
Mr. Rogers provided an update on his business privilege tax research. From January to May there have been thirty properties sold, and of this number eighteen appear to be rentals. He stressed the importance and simple procedural change to establish a Standard Operating Procedure for business privilege tax reports to Berkheimer Tax Innovations. He recommended better communication between the Treasurer and Code Enforcement Departments and requiring rental property owners to provide three years of proof of licensing and tax payments to increase revenue of this tax established in 1979.  
  
Mr. Tucci referred to the written report and offered to provide tours of the station now that COVID restrictions have been lifted. Mayor Kaag thanked Mr. Tucci for their assistance in replacing the garage doors.
5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**  
Motion to approve the May 17, 2023, regular meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**
6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**
  - a. **Ordinance – Wireless Communication Facilities in Rights-of-Way** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to establish standards relating to Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF) within street and sidewalk rights-of-way. Mr. Murray noted the removal of the adoption of the design manual via resolution from the agenda tonight until we converse with the Township of Spring as recommended by the solicitor. Mr. Becker recommended the adoption of the design manual via

ordinance as opposed to resolution. Mr. Wert noted the engineer's review of Cohen Law Groups draft ordinance amendment and design manual stating there were minor recommendations made by the engineer. Authorization to advertise was tabled to allow additional time for the solicitor to review.

- b. **Ordinance – Adoption of International Fire Code** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the intent to adopt the 2018 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC). Mr. Moyer noted the simple process to update the edition of the IFC from 2015 to 2018 under Section 228-27 Adoption of IFC.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of an amendment to adopt the 2018 International Fire Code. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Ordinance – Adoption of Uniform Construction Code** – Mr. Moyer indicated that the state has adopted the 2018 editions of building codes that have been elected to administer and enforce the provisions of the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act. This adoption is similar to that of the 2015 adoption that adopts revisions to items such as the name of jurisdiction to be inserted and limit to the height of grass, etc.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of an amendment to adopt the 2018 Uniform Construction Code. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Ordinance – Parking Prohibited Certain Hours** – Mr. Lincoln shared that the proposed amendment is in response to concerns brought to the Traffic & Infrastructure Committee's attention regarding school buses blocking traffic around the Sacred Heart School during pick up and drop off times. This amendment would extend school zones on Franklin Street and Seventh Avenue to provide an area for buses to pull out of the stream of traffic while loading and unloading. A side benefit of this implementation would be the creation of two additional parking spaces. One on Franklin Street and one on Seventh Avenue during hours outside of school zone timeframes. The proposed amendment benefits the neighboring community and school.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of an amendment to extend school zones on Franklin Street and South Seventh Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carries 7-0.**

- e. **Ordinance – Special Purpose Parking Zones** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the proposed amendment that would add a temporary loading zone on Franklin Street, add a handicapped space designation on Tulpehocken Avenue, and relocate a handicapped space designation on Chestnut Street.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of an amendment to add a temporary loading zone on Franklin Street, and a handicapped parking space on Tulpehocken Avenue and relocate a handicapped parking space on Chestnut Street. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Resolution 2023-10 Fixing Charges for Industrial Wastes** – It was noted that these charges are updated on an annual basis as designated by the Joint Municipal Authority.

Motion to alter the charges for industrial waste per the Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- g. **Resolution 2023-11 Ann Street Grant Funding** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the intent of this resolution to allow the Borough Manager, with the assistance of the engineer, to apply for and

execute documents relating to a multimodal transportation fund grant opportunity in the amount of \$255,155 to fund upgrades to existing curbing, sidewalks, and handicap ramp access along Ann Street.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-11 Ann Street Grant Funding to authorize the Borough Manager to apply for a multimodal transportation fund grant opportunity. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- h. **Resolution 2023-12 Extension of Local Disaster Emergency** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to extend the local disaster emergency until the next Borough Council meeting. This extension will be requested until South Second Avenue has been reopened for use and the expended disaster emergency funds have been reimbursed.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-12 extending the Proclamation of the Local Disaster Emergency until the July 18, 2023 Borough Council meeting. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- i. **Resolution 2023-13 Fee Schedule Amendment** – Mr. Lineweaver noted the additions or modifications to the fee schedule that included fees to be assessed per appointment for no show or inspection cancellations of rental inspections, establishment of a rental permit reinstatement fee, establishment of wireless communication facilities application fees, water meter testing and replacement of water meter fees, color photocopy fees, and criminal history record information act fees as recommended by the district attorney's office. Sergeant Marks noted that these records would be requested during instances of a lawsuit.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-13 Fee Schedule amendment. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

## 7. **CONSULTANT'S REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker indicated that he had nothing new to report that is not otherwise covered on the agenda.
- b. **Engineer's Report** – Ms. Stevens introduced herself as an engineer of thirty-eight years, filling in for Mr. Unger. She met with the Public Works Director and Fire Chief at the fire department to discuss garage door replacement. Mr. Murray attempted to contact Ben Druck Door Company to determine if they are a Costars authorized vendor to avoid the need to formally bid this door replacement project. This project is currently in a holding pattern.

Ms. Stevens noted an action item recommended by Mr. Unger to prepare bid documents for Borough Hall and Police Department security cameras and replacement Penn Avenue cameras. She noted that it could be six months to a year until the \$265,000 project is ready to receive bids.

Motion to authorize the engineer to prepare bid documents to receive bids for Borough Hall and Police Department security cameras and Penn Avenue camera replacements. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Stevens noted the creation of a Pickleball Court angle parking concept to create more than seventy parking spaces, including handicapped spaces within a two-block span funded by the Pickleball Association. She noted that the City of Reading is waiting for the rendering, and there

are no safety concerns. It was recommended that Ms. Stevens provide the City of Reading with this rendering.

Mr. Grassley shared a surprise found during the preconstruction meeting for the paving of Sycamore Road that an extra block was included in the bid from Fifth Avenue to Museum Road.

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Stevens and Ms. Shenk departed the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

8. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

Mr. Lineaweaver congratulated Mr. Murray on achieving his Certified Borough Official certification. Mr. Murray also congratulated Mr. Lineaweaver for this same achievement. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that he was featured in the June edition of the Borough News magazine. He has also been invited to join a televised round table discussion in Camp Hill on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

- a. **Trash, Recycling & Yard Waste Collection & Disposal Contract** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to draft a request for proposals with various options of trash, recycling, yard waste collection and disposal. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that the current contract expires on December 31<sup>st</sup> and the desire to seek multiple bid options including the consideration of offering yard waste disposal in lieu of one trash collection day.

Motion to draft a request for bids with the borough solicitor for the collection, transportation, disposal, marketing and processing of municipal solid waste, recyclable materials, and yard waste. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Letters of Resignation** – Mr. Murray noted receipt of three letters of resignation and requested consideration to accept these resignations.

Motion to accept a letter of resignation from Paige West of the Environmental Advisory Council, Benjamin LaManna from the Economic Development Committee, and Chad Moyer from the Shade Tree Commission. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Letter of Interest** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the previous receipt of a letter of interest from Michael Hayes, who is an arborist by trade to become a member of the Shade Tree Commission.

Motion to appoint Michael Hayes to the Shade Tree Commission. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Murray noted the receipt of two letters of appreciation, one from the Berks County Emergency Response Team (BCERT) thanking the Public Works Department for moving BCERT equipment from the R.M. Palmer location; and a second letter from Mary's Shelter for the donation of emergency hygiene kits. Mr. Murray reported that the hygiene kits were donated to the Borough and left over from the R.M. Palmer incident.

Motion to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

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

- May 24<sup>th</sup> – She swore in a Fire Officer
- June 1<sup>st</sup> – She attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Pride Flag raising event. She noted that Ms. Drobnick and Mrs. Bressler read aloud the recently adopted diversity and inclusion resolution.
- June 3<sup>rd</sup> – She attended the Reading Pride March event with other members of Council.
- June 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> – She attended the Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs (PSAB) Conference with other members of Council.
- June 10<sup>th</sup> – She participated in the DeNova Detect natural gas alarm distribution to residents.
- June 17<sup>th</sup> – Attended the Art on the Avenue event.
- June 18<sup>th</sup> - Mayor Kaag was unable to attend the Barnhardt Bucket Brigade cleanup but encouraged residents to participate in these events as well as the larger cleanup events.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

11. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Sergeant Marks referred to his report and highlighted an increase in foot and bike patrols during the overnight hours. Secondly, he highlighted the Criminal Investigation workload that has been handled solely by Criminal Investigator Voorhies since the end of March. For a better understanding of this workload the number of cases and projects were provided within his report.

Mr. Wert found it interesting that the majority of calls for service take place on Tuesday and Wednesday between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley referred to his report and offered to answer any questions. He noted that a number of new trash cans have been placed on Penn Avenue and the older Penn Avenue trash cans will be refurbished for use in the park/pool area. It was noted that a 30-yard dumpster was not sufficient to handle the increased attendance at the recent Art on the Avenue event. Mr. Wert noted that all vendor spaces were filled this year and even the 400 block of Penn Avenue was busy.

Mr. Grassley noted receipt of a new utility truck and requested permission to list Utility Truck #18 for sale on Public Surplus.

Motion to list Utility Truck #18 for sale with crane and plow on Public Surplus. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Kaag inquired as to the list of vehicles in the Public Works report. Mr. Grassley stated that this system tracks the expense by department. Mr. Murray shared his thoughts to potentially lease smaller vehicles for the Code, Recreation and Administration Departments as opposed to keeping older police vehicles on the road.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and offered to answer any questions. He noted that he is still working through the process of mounting equipment on the new engine and ensuring that all drivers and firefighters are comfortable working with the new engine prior to officially being put into service. A brake issue is currently being addressed on the old engine.

Mr. Lineaweaver congratulated Chief Moyer on applying for and being awarded \$15,000 in grant funding for the replacement of three thermal imaging cameras by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner.

Chief Moyer reported that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant awarded in-station Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) air compressor and fill station has arrived and been installed.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln.  
**Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his written report and noted a break in the grass cutting violations thanks, in part, to the drought. The department is currently addressing hedge violations that encroach upon public sidewalks.

Mr. Lineaweaver noted that Norfolk Southern trimmed the brush near the Chestnut Street crossing. Mr. Moyer indicated that Norfolk Southern went above and beyond the call of duty by addressing the embankment on the west side that is owned by the adjacent property owner.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag.  
**Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Ratcliffe noted the highest number of vendor participation in the Art on the Avenue event this year and that the weather was perfect for an outdoor event. He thanked the Public Works and Police Departments for their amazing assistance as usual. Mr. Ratcliffe shared information gathered by Placer.ai software that uses mobile device technology to determine foot traffic and reported 27,000 visitors to last year's event. He is waiting to hear from the County as to how many visitors attended this year's event. It was noted that several vendors have registered for the Fall Festival event and the increased vendor interest has enabled him to reduce the cost to advertise. The following grant opportunities were reviewed:

- **Lighting Grant:** A meeting is scheduled for later this week with Illuminated Concepts and Intellistreets to discuss upgrading the Penn Avenue light heads to LEDs with speakers. He hopes this project can be completed by the end of the year.
- **Gateway Grant:** They are working with Berks Art and Goggleworks to engage the community to bring renditions for the Gateway to Borough Council for approval prior to moving forward.
- **Codes Grant:** Met with representatives of Derck & Edson to discuss the next steps.
- **Façade Grant:** The final day is approaching for businesses to apply for a \$2,500 matching façade grant. Mr. Ratcliffe noted approximately a dozen applicants thus far that have applied for façade improvements and signage upgrades. It was thought that increased building material costs may have limited the number of applicants.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

12. **COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce** – Mrs. Bressler reported that a meeting was not held this month and noted attendance at the Pride Flag raising ceremony earlier this month.

Motion to accept the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly referred to his written report and noted an action item to approve two additional hires for the pool and playground programs.

Mr. Lineaweaver provided an overview of the list of hires noting a new playground leader at \$10.00 per hour; and a front desk person at \$10.25 per hour.

Motion to approve the list of new hire and rehire applicants for the pool and playground programs. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Esterly stated that his focus is currently on the pool and playground programs that are up and running. The first field trip is planned tomorrow morning at the Reading Museum Planetarium which includes a scavenger hunt. He noted the good turnout for Vines & Vibes and the Recreation Commissions first hosted Concert in the Park.

Ms. Drobnick expanded on the Concert in the Park event noting a resident musician and artist who designed West Reading T-shirt graphics. The T-shirts are on sale at Borough Hall and will be available at the next Concert in the Park event. The next event that will lead up to a larger Pride Celebration event will feature three bands, a corn-hole tournament complete with trophies and a 50/50 lawn dart toss. Ms. Drobnick also noted the Recreation Commission's pursuit of \$20,000 in grant funding, with the assistance of State Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, to improve security cameras in the park and provide sound equipment.

Motion to accept the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert noted discussions earlier in the meeting on a number of topics and shared the progress on implementing code red and code blue regulations for animals and the delegation of code and police department enforcement versus an animal control officer. There is a long list of items to be reviewed by the Planning Commission during the coming year.

Mr. Lineaweaver noted that the owner of Tony's of West Reading joined the meeting to discuss his appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board for a variance to awning regulations. Mr. Wert noted a few concerns of the first rendering and the new rendering that would require a marginal variance.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert noted his opportunity to view the Motor Club space at 416 Penn Avenue that is not yet open to the public. The concept is finer dining that is exquisitely detailed and plans to open in August or September of this year. A bubble tea business is rumored to be planned by the owner of 450 Penn Avenue. The Legacy Cigar Lounge located in the former Chef

Alan's space should be opening in the next two weeks. Barley Mow plans to renovate the second floor of 717 and 719 Penn Avenue into dining space. This would convert the use from residential to commercial. Highlights from Wyomissing Borough included plans to develop a 30-unit apartment building at Park Road and Penn Avenue; the large parcel located behind the former Friendly's restaurant may be developed into an apartment building; and the boiler house property on the former Vanity Fair property may be developed into an apartment building. It was thought that some of these developments may be planned in preparation of a possible new train corridor that would increase mobility for Reading and Philadelphia residents.

Motion to accept the Economic Development Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Kaag referred to the minutes and noted the Free Market that is planned this Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and welcomed residents to bring unwanted items to potentially trade while meeting members of the community.

Motion to accept the Environmental Advisory Council report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Lincoln shared his appreciation of resident feedback during the forty-five-minute public comment period with residents that attended the meeting. Sergeant Marks is spearheading the creation of a policy to address requests for road closures. The committee is discussing a policy for resident motorcycle permit parking and whether motorcycles can share a parking space with another vehicle. Options to improve the amplification of sound in Council Chambers for visitors both virtually and in person are being reviewed.

Motion to accept the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- g. **Shade Tree Commission** – The June Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- h. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray noted a training video related to housekeeping safety and review of the safety manual.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

### 13. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Transfer of Funds** – Mrs. Rentschler recommended consideration to transfer \$1,000,000 in funds from M&T Bank to PLGIT Prime to earn additional interest. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that this would increase the amount of interest earned each month by \$3,000. Mrs. Rentschler indicated that funds can be withdrawn twice per month from the Prime account if needed.

Motion to authorize the transfer of \$1,000,000 from M&T Bank to a PLGIT Prime account. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Financing K-9 Replacement Vehicle** – Mrs. Rentschler indicated that the lowest interest rate found was through First National Bank for a two-year loan at 4.88% tax free financing. The dealer rate was quoted at 9.95%. Mrs. Rentschler recommended purchasing vehicles outright in the future to avoid finance charges. Unfortunately, only a portion of this purchase had been budgeted this year.



Motion to approve a two-year, 4.88% tax free financing loan through First National Bank to fund the replacement K-9 vehicle. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Financial Statement Ending 5/31/2023** – There were no questions or comments.
- b. **Payment Approval Report 5/18/23 to 6/15/23 and 6/16/23 to 6/20/23** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 5/31/2023, and Payment Approval Reports of 5/18/23 to 6/15/23 and 6/16/23 to 6/20/23. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers spoke of trash collection along Penn Avenue, especially following the weekend Farmers' Market events, and recommended the Public Works Department collect trash from the public trash cans along the 500 block of Penn Avenue. Mr. Grassley indicated that this could be implemented. Mr. Rogers recommended the installation of an additional trash can near Sweet Ride Ice Cream. Mr. Grassley indicated that an additional trash can was installed near Sweet Ride Ice Cream and appreciated the feedback.

- 15. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary