

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

May 17, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Wednesday, May 17, 2017 with the following persons present: Council President Carl G. Garman, Vice President Nathalie Kulesa, Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr., Council Members Grace M. Craze, Christopher C. Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson, Philip C. Wert, Solicitor Charles Haws, Police Chief Stephen D. Powell, Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler, Public Works Director Dean Murray, Recreation Director Helen Moyer, Engineer Tom Unger, Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach, Fire Chief Mark Burkholder, Borough Manager Cathy L. Hoffman and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira. Council Member Nicholas Imbesi was unable to attend.

VISITORS:	Karen Livingood	Resident
	David Amato	Resident
	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Katina Boyce	Mobilitie
	Doug Zeeger	Resident
	Andrew Kearney	Resident
	Hunter Beane	Resident
	Jennifer Bressler	Planning Commission Member
	Mark Woodward	Property/Business Owner

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Carl G. Garman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

Certificate of Appreciation Presentation: Chief Powell presented plaques of recognition and honorable retirement to Sergeant Keith Phillips for his twenty-five years of service with the West Reading Police Department. Sergeant Phillips has served as Patrol, Corporal, Sergeant and Criminal Investigator during his years of service.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
Mark Woodward, owner of West Reading Tavern handed out flyers expressing his concern regarding the lack of parking provided by the Borough and recent towing of 26 cars from the shopping center parking lot. Council members recognized and acknowledged the issue in the commercial as well as residential areas. However, currently land and funds are unavailable to construct a parking garage. Council members suggested business owner's work together to find a solution.

Karen Livingood inquired as to a timeline to complete the Sunset alley paving project and requested information be published to keep residents aware of these types of projects. Mr. Garman stated the timeline would be addressed during the engineer's report.

3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**
Moved to approve by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Council minutes of April 18, 2017 and April 25, 2017. **Motion carried 6-0.**

4. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

Motion to approve Ordinance 1072 to reinstate left turns from 5th Avenue to Cherry Street and add two handicapped parking spaces. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 6-0.**

A resident inquired as to the approval of a handicapped parking space within the 500 block of Chestnut Street for a resident who does not appear to be handicapped. Chief Powell stated the verification procedure was followed and the request approved. The resident also noted five dogs living at this home, Mr. Garman suggested a complaint form be filed with the Code Department as ordinances regulate the number of dogs per residence. Mr. Wert provided the resident with a complaint form.

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Mobilitie Conditional Use Decision** – Motion to adopt the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision regarding the conditional use hearing to install a utility pole within the right-of-way consisting of a wireless communication facility. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- b. **Land Acquisition – Phase I Site Assessment** – Liberty Environmental, Inc. completed this assessment and will be discussed during Executive Session.
- c. **Equus Subdivision Approval** – Motion to approve the Vanity Fair lot consolidation plan subject to completing the outstanding item of draft legal descriptions/deed for new consolidated lot as recommended by the Planning Commission. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- d. **Administration Door Access** – Chief Powell reported an estimate of \$2500 to install an additional door lock to the main office entrance. Mr. Murray indicated the funds are available in line item 01-409-373 Maintenance and Repairs to cover this expense. Chief Powell recommended approving \$3000 to cover any additional costs. Motion to approve transfer of funds in the amount of \$3000 to install the door lock to the Administrative Office. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 6-0.**

6. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Haws had no additional report to give other than items found elsewhere on the agenda. Motion to approve the Solicitor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- b. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger spoke about the following:
 - The Parkview Road Bridge permit has been received and will be out for bid next week. Mr. Unger anticipates information to be provided to Council during the July meeting for approval.
 - The Buttonwood Street paving project has been completed, however the application for payment has not yet been received.
 - The Vanity Fair annexation land development plan is currently going through the approval process with J.E.A.P.
 - The South Sixth Avenue Sidewalk Enhancement Project has been extended to include the three properties North of Wayne Avenue that were not included in the original specification. A species of tree has been selected to allow removing the planned tree plates from the project, saving approximately \$20,000. This will allow replacement of the

ADA ramp at the 6th & Wayne Avenue intersection as well as adding a planting strip area to this block. A request for bids will be advertised next week and bid opening is planned on June 9th.

- The Pump Station flow meter has been installed at the Borough Garage and kept under budget by the Public Works Department installing the bypass pump.
- The CFA grant agreement is to be executed and returned for the Sunset Alley project. As soon as the grant documents are received, the project can be advertised. This project will be completed this summer and Mr. Unger anticipates approval of bid during the July meeting. Motion to execute the grant documents. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.** Mr. Unger stated the 2nd alley-paving project would be a separate contract, however they should be completed at the same time. Mr. Murray recommended scheduling the 2nd alley-paving project separate from the 6th Avenue sidewalk project.
- Fire hydrant training has been completed and Mr. Murray will be handling the testing.
- Contract plans and specifications for bidding are being prepared for the water line replacement project on Spruce Street between 6th and 7th Avenues and the valve replacement project at 6th and Franklin Streets. Mr. Unger anticipates this project to take place during late summer of this year.
- The Codes Department and Zoning report is also included in the written report.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to accept the Engineer's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Garman reminded Council members to review for next month's meeting the addition of a local contact requirement for landlords that do not reside in the area.

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

- a. **Street Sweeper Lease Purchase Agreement** – Mrs. Hoffman reported the street sweeper has been delivered and a lease agreement was required to be reviewed by the Solicitor and executed. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to authorize execution of the lease agreement. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Rodriguez gave a verbal report of the civil service hearing and meetings he attended last month.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Mayor's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

9. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell referred to his written report and noted the following:
- The annual Armed Forces Day Parade will take place this Saturday, May 20th and no parking signs will be posted along the route of Penn Avenue 8th to 3rd Avenues, 3rd Avenue to Spruce Street and Spruce Street to 7th Avenue. Penn Avenue will be closed at 8 AM and the detour route will be Reading Avenue.
 - During a recent visit to the pool and new concession building Chief Powell recommended the installation of a keyed dead bolt lock to the door located between

the new building, adjacent to the old building, and to the inside of the field access door. Also, the addition of a security shade to the service window towards the athletic field is recommended. The Chief anticipates the cost for these items to be minimal and could potentially prevent costly damages. Mr. Murray will install the door locks and research options/cost to install security shade.

- Chief Powell reported the moped hit and run at 5th & Penn Avenue yesterday perpetrator is in custody as of 3 PM today. The new camera system along with Facebook calls greatly assisted in this apprehension.
- Chief Powell noted one item for Executive Session regarding personnel.

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Police Department report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray referred to his written report and the following items were discussed:

- Request approval to hire two part-time summer employees: 1) Rich Smith who is retired from the hospital (this would be his first year) at a rate of \$7.50/hr.; 2) Nate Hertzog who is a school teacher and has been employed previously, at a rate of \$8.25/hr. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the hiring of two part-time summer employees. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- A listing of sign modifications to be made Borough wide is under way.
- Tomlinson Bomberger performs the field fertilization, which has been provided by Berks Catholic High School for the past two years. Also, pesticide courses have been completed by members of the Public Works Department allowing them to treat weeds, etc.
- Mr. Garman requested the breakdown of events such as the Farmer's Market, Art on the Avenue and Fall Fest to happen at the approved time to prevent further expenses.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the Public Works Director's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Mark Burkholder did not arrive until much later in the meeting due to a training class.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Fire Department report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

Mr. Rohrbach referred to his written report and the following items were discussed:

- The Reading Eagle article regarding the \$126,500 residential improvement grants received.
- The Earth Day event went well overall despite the weather.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the WRCRF report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

10. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer arrived at 8:58 p.m. and referred to her written report and noted the following items:

- Request approval to hire four lifeguards at a rate of \$8.25/hr. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the hiring of four lifeguards. **Motion carried**

6-0.

- Request approval to allow Pretzel City Sports to utilize a portion of the park system for their 10-mile race at no cost to the Borough. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- Request approval to rescind the previous approval to allocate land for a skate park due to the lack of progress and interest shown over the past two years. This action would allow additional land to create a Disc Golf Course. Mrs. Moyer will notify the interested party in writing of the rescinded decision. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Recreation Commission report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert referred to the minutes of May 3rd and noted the following:

- Mrs. Bressler is attending Joint Comprehensive Plan meetings and Mr. Wert anticipates completion in approximately 18 months.
- The Committee reviewed additional questions regarding codification and anticipates adoption at the end of the summer following the Solicitor's review.
- Building permits have been issued to begin construction of apartments on 3 floors of the Narrow Fabric building.
- A recommendation for business owners to discuss options for gas meter placement with UGI prior to installation to the front of their properties along Penn Avenue.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Planning Commission report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

c. **Economic Development Committee** – Meeting was cancelled.

d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Wert referred to the minutes of April 24th and noted the following:

- A discussion regarding an energy audit of Borough Hall has commenced with two vendors. Upon receiving recommendations the problem areas should be addressed quickly resulting in a savings on energy funds.
- Yard waste collection is underway at the Borough Garage.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Environmental Advisory Council report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committees** – Mr. Lincoln referred to draft minutes and noted the following:

- Discussions have begun regarding revisions to the "no parking" sign fee structure as well as a cap to the length of time signs are valid.
- The parking study will be discussed with regard to short-term and long-term solutions. Possible private parking lot agreements or valet parking would be short-term solutions.
- A Green Light Go grant has recently been received in the amount of \$134,000 to upgrade traffic signals. The Borough must match \$33,000, which has been budgeted. The upgrades are to include a battery backup to Penn Avenue traffic signals.
- The 7th & Walnut intersection will need to be surveyed and a cost for the survey will be requested from Mr. Unger.

- Snow ordinance revisions are being discussed to potentially include an increase to the path width for commercial properties as well as progressive fines for commercial and residential properties for each day the violation continues.
- Reading Hospital sign permits are being held until a meeting is scheduled with Mr. Murray to discuss banner sign placement to prohibit removal of trees.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee reports. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – Mr. Murray reported the meeting was cancelled due to the lack of a quorum and noted the following:

- All tree slots have been filled along Penn & Reading Avenues. Mulching will be completed this week.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the verbal Shade Tree Commission report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Finance Committee** – Ms. Thompson reported that the Committee met on May 15th and referred to the following:

- Review of payment approval report with regards to electric bill distribution.
- Request being made to Maillie to reduce their fees due to the minimized time to perform the audit.
- Review of Liquid Fuels and Western Berks Water Association audits as well as the upcoming Teamsters healthcare contract.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Finance Committee report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Fire Chief Mark Burkholder arrived at 8:50 p.m.

- h. **Safety Committee** – Meeting was cancelled.

- i. **Public Safety Committee** – Mr. Garman referred to the minutes of the May 2nd & 15th meetings and noted the following:

- Reviewed previously created special event and street closure applications along with ordinance wording.
- Reviewing possible annual Fire Marshall Inspection of commercial spaces.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the May 2, 2017 & May 15, 2017 Public Safety Committee reports. **Motion carried 6-0.**

11. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Revenues with Comparison to Budget** – Mrs. Rentschler answered the following questions:

- The Water Fund General Expense line item even though approaching 80% should be sufficient for the remainder of the year. Charges relating to Caselle posted early in the year and postage are the significant items charged against this line item.
- The Sewer Fund General Expense line item also in the 80% range and should be sufficient as well. Charges relating to Caselle posted early in the year postage and Ehrlich's treatments for the pump station would be the only items charged against this line item.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Revenues with Comparison

to Budget Report for the three month ending April 30th. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Payment Approval Report** – Ms. Craze inquired as to the \$7000 electric bill for “Street Lighting SV”. Mrs. Rentschler stated three of the nineteen electric bills are for streetlights. Mr. Murray will check into possible street lighting issues. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the Payment Approval Report for the periods of 4/19/2017 – 5/12/2017 and 5/13/17 – 5/17/17. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Garman stated that due to recent events his confidence in the Mayor has declined. An expenditure of legal fees occurred last week pertaining to the Mayor attempting to place a moratorium on the political sign ordinance to allow placement of signs within planting strips prior to the Primary Election. Mr. Garman reminded the Mayor of an ordinance appointing the Borough Manager to oversee the Code Department. Mr. Garman plans to review and announce potential changes to the Committees of Council structure and will announce his decision during next month’s meeting.

12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to executive session at 10:27 p.m. When Council reconvened at 11:10 p.m. Mr. Garman stated they discussed personnel and land acquisition items.

Motion to hire Brandon Breitenstein on May 23rd to the Police Department. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to authorize the purchase of land from RDC Realco, LLC for \$1.00. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

James T. Rogers requested information pertaining to the \$7000 electric bill be researched for next month’s meeting.

Hunter Beane questioned why the Mayor was not cited for placement of signs in the planting strip.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to adjourn the meeting at 11:12 p.m. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager