

**Borough of West Reading**  
**Borough Council**  
August 20, 2013 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, August 20, 2013 with the following persons present: Council President Kevin M. Conrad; Vice President James J. Gallen Jr.; Council Members Elizabeth L. Heckler, Deborah Hutcheson, Amy B. Good, Nathalie R. Kulesa, Philip C. Wert; Mayor Shane J. Keller; Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler; Borough Solicitor Daniel P. Becker; Fire Chief Mark D. Burkholder; Public Works Director Dean E. Murray; Chief Code Enforcement Officer Tracey L. Levering; Elm Street Manager Dean L. Rohrbach; Administrative Assistant Cathy L. Hoffman; Borough Engineer Terry Naugle. Sgt. Keith Phillips OIC was unable to attend.

<b>VISITORS:</b>	Ruth Cardell	Temple
	Carl Garman	Resident
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Peter Gustis	Resident
	Karen Livingood	Resident
	Jim Livingood	Resident
	John A. Pietrobone	Resident
	Linda A. Pietrobone	Resident
	Audrey Schaeffer	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Valentin Rodriguez, Jr.	Resident
	Tina Shenk	Property Owner
	Michael Doyle	Resident
	Christian Doyle	Resident
	Becca Gregg	Reading Eagle

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Kevin M. Conrad called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Linda Pietrobone asked about the status of her handicapped parking space request. It was noted that this will be discussed as part of the Police Department report.

Oswald Herbert spoke about the closing of the Lukoil station on Penn Avenue, noting that the property is contaminated and that there is a ventilation system on site to prevent the buildup of gases that must run at all times. Mr. Conrad asked Mr. Sichler to contact DEP concerning the property.

James T. Rogers said that he had attended the last Traffic meeting and spoke about a 'no parking' sign in the alley behind 616 Penn Avenue which is prohibiting parking on a public street which he felt is not correct.

Michael Doyle said he has been working with the Codes Department and has filed a grievance concerning the new lighting that has been installed at the Reading Museum and questioned whether they had necessary permits to do so. He also complained about the concrete sign on the property which is lit overnight as well. He said that the lights are so intense that they light up his bedroom at night.

3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

**Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the minutes of July 16, 2013.  
**Motion carried.**

4. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Waste Disposal Contract – Mr. Sichler reiterated the options of renewing the contract with Pioneer Crossing or entering into a contract with Western Berks Landfill which would save the Borough approximate \$38,000 in 2014. The only negative is if the bridge leading to the landfill is downgraded in weight restrictions which would require the Borough to have to look elsewhere for landfill usage.

As part of the worst case scenario it was noted that if the bridge to the landfill was downgraded then the contract with Western Berks could state that the Borough would be released from the agreement. Mr. Sichler added that if that were the case, the Borough might have to rebid the contract with the trash hauler because of the change in location. **Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Ms. Good to direct Mr. Sichler and Mr. Becker to begin the process of leasing space at Western Berks Landfill. **Motion carried.**

Committee/Commission Board Vacancies – Mr. Sichler said that letters of interest have been received for the Planning Commission from residents Kim Collins and Christin Kelly however Ms. Kelly has offered to serve on the Zoning Hearing Board if necessary. It was noted that there are two vacancies on the Zoning Hearing Board. **Moved by** Ms. Good and seconded by Mr. Gallen to appoint Kim Collins to the Planning Commission and Christin Kelly to the Zoning Hearing Board (longest open term available). **Motion carried.**

Mr. Sichler noted that there are still vacancies on the Zoning Hearing Board, Vacancy Board, Shade Tree Commission and two on Environmental Advisory Council.

5. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

- a. Solicitor's Report – Mr. Becker said he had nothing further to note but did request an Executive Session. Mr. Wert asked if there was anything new to report concerning the Belovich Townhouse development and Mr. Becker said that he hadn't heard anything recently but would check into it.
- b. Engineer's Report – Mr. Naugle provided an update concerning the 'H' alley reconstruction project. He also noted the payment application for the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Sidewalk Project. **Moved by** Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to release \$37,714 for Payment Application #1 to Reamstown Excavating. **Motion carried.**

**Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Engineer's Report.  
**Motion carried.**

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

- a. Planning Commission Resignation & Appointment – Mr. Sichler said this was covered under Unfinished Business.
- b. Rock Salt Purchase – Mr. Sichler said that the Borough has an opportunity to obtain rock salt by using piggy back contract through the Berks County Cooperative Purchasing Council and the City of Reading. The cost is \$53.78 per ton which is better than any other pricing available. **Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to enter into the piggy back contract with the City of Reading for the 2013-2014 rock salt purchase. **Motion carried.**
- c. 2014 MMOs – Mr. Sichler reviewed the information that was distributed concerning the Minimum Municipal Obligations for the 2014 pensions, both uniform and non-uniform. The police pension obligation for 2014 is \$218,533., the non uniform is \$50,507. He noted that the investments have been doing well therefore the amounts are down from 2013 and 2012. **Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to pay the Minimum Municipal Obligation for Police and Non-uniform pension plans for 2014. **Motion carried.**

- d. Vehicle Sale – Mr. Sichler requested permission to advertise the sale of a 2003 Durango. **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to advertise the 2003 Durango for sale. **Motion carried.**
- e. Congressman Pitt – Mr. Sichler announced that Congressman Pitt (federal congressman from the 16<sup>th</sup> District) will be in the area on September 26<sup>th</sup> and invited anyone interested in speaking with him to meet at 9:00 a.m. at Borough Hall.
- f. Treasurer Vacancy – It was noted that the Treasurer position was advertised and the three top candidates were chosen however only two remain interested. It was decided that the Personnel Committee along with Mrs. Heckler will interview those candidates.

**Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Borough Manager's Report. **Motion carried.**

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

Mayor Keller reported that the minutes from the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting as well as the June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting were distributed. Also, because of Sgt. Phillips' absence, Mayor Keller provided the Police Department report as follows:

- Handicapped parking spaces have been requested on the east side of South Fourth Avenue, one between Penn and Cherry and the other between Chestnut and Franklin. **Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Mr. Gallen to advertise the ordinance for the handicapped parking spaces on S. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. **Motion carried.**
- The recently hired part-time Police secretary has resigned and there was some discussion whether the position should be re-advertised. There will be further discussion before a decision is made.

**Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve the Mayor's Report and the Police Department Report. **Motion carried.**

8. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. Code Enforcement – Mrs. Levering referred to her written report. In response to a question concerning the Certificate of Occupancy inspections, Mrs. Levering reported that nine have been completed so far, and reports for each are on file. Mrs. Levering was asked to include this information as part of her regular Council report.

Mrs. Levering said that the final plans for the Reading Hospital 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue construction project are ready for Council's signatures. She added that a reaffirmation from Council is also necessary for the prior approval that was granted at the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Some discussion followed regarding the agreements between the Hospital and the Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Good to approve the final plan for the Reading Hospital, contingent upon the remaining outstanding items being resolved as discussed. **Motion carried.**

**Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Code Enforcement report. **Motion carried.**

- b. Police Department – This was covered in the Mayor's Report.
- c. Public Works – Mr. Murray had nothing to add to his written report.

**Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve the Public Works Director's Report. **Motion carried.**

- d. Fire Department – There were no questions for the Fire Chief.

**Moved** by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Fire Chief's Report.  
**Motion carried.**

- e. Elm Street – Mr. Rohrbach referred to his written report.

**Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Elm Street Manager's Report. **Motion carried.**

9. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. Traffic and Infrastructure Committees – Mr. Conrad reported that the Traffic Committee discussed the following:

- The loading zone on N. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue was discussed and it was recommended that it would be easier to park trucks if the zone was located at the corner rather than one space in from the corner as it is now. **Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to move the existing loading zone on N. 6<sup>th</sup> to the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> & Penn. **Motion carried.**
- Bicycling and skateboarding on Penn Avenue is prohibited and the Committee discussed the addition of signage indicating this. It was the recommendation that a stenciled 'no bicycling' symbol be added to the street corners at the bottom of the handicapped ramps. This will ensure that the granite sidewalks will not be marred in any way. It was also noted that the Traffic minutes did not reflect that the discussion included skateboarding as well therefore the minutes will have to be amended.
- Handicapped parking was again discussed and the Committee will be discussing it further at the next meeting.

**Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Traffic Committee report.  
**Motion carried.**

Regarding Infrastructure, Mr. Sichler said that the first meeting has been held with McCormick Taylor and the potential scope of work for the Parkview Road Bridge was discussed. The funding available from the County should be adequate to cover the structural problems but will not include painting it. McCormick Taylor will provide a report for the next Council meeting.

- b. Recreation Commission – Mr. Sichler announced that the Recreation Coordinator had resigned.

**Moved** by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Mr. Gallen to accept the resignation of Jodie Ghen.

**Motion carried.** Mrs. Kulesa said it was the recommendation of the Commission that the position be advertised again, that the Commission review the candidates and recommend the top three to Council. Council was not in favor of deviating from the current hiring process.

**Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to advertise for the position of Recreation Coordinator. **Motion carried.**

Mrs. Kulesa also reported that Mr. Vogel had prepared a 5 year plan which has been attached to the minutes for use during the budget process. She also asked if Council wanted to go ahead with all scheduled activities for the fall as planned, given that there is no Recreation Coordinator and Mr. Conrad said that it was up to the Commission, depending if there were sufficient volunteers to keep everything going. It was decided that everything would go forward as planned except the 'Tons of Trucks' event which has been cancelled. Mr. Conrad also noted that Council would support the Commission as much as they can.

Mrs. Heckler asked about the sale of food during football games and Mr. Sichler said that Berks Catholic has a trailer for food sales that meets Department of Agriculture requirements and doesn't use any Borough resources, including electricity.

**Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Recreation Commission report. **Motion carried.**

- c. Environmental Advisory Council – There were no action items in the minutes from the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. **Moved** by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the Environmental Advisory Council report. **Motion carried.**

- d. Safety Committee – There were no questions concerning the July 23<sup>rd</sup> minutes.

**Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Safety Committee Report. **Motion carried.**

10. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget Report for the 7 months ending 7/31/2013. **Motion carried.**
- b. **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve Payment Approval Report for 7/17/2013 - 8/15/2013 and 8/16/2013 – 8/20/2013. **Motion carried.**

11. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Oswald Herbert asked about bicycling on the sidewalk and Mr. Wert noted that it only applies to Penn Avenue.

James T. Rogers asked why the police department can't get the bicycling and skateboarding under control and Mr. Conrad said that they have to witness it happening or receive a call of complaint from someone who has witnessed it.

Karen Livingood thanked Council for advertising for the Recreation Coordinator position and asked what role Recreation would play in the hiring. Mr. Conrad said that the Personnel Committee would continue to do the hiring so Mrs. Livingood requested that they meet as soon as possible and make the interview process a priority.

Valentin Rodriguez asked if skateboarding is prohibited on sidewalks however no one knew the answer therefore Mr. Sichler will review our ordinances to see if skateboards are mentioned. If not, he will prepare something for Council to review.

James T. Rogers spoke about the municipal pensions and the overall indebtedness of the Borough.

12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to Executive Session at 8:11 p.m. to discuss personnel, contract negotiations and potential litigation. When the meeting reconvened at 9:02 p.m., the following action was taken:

**Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to authorize special counsel Christopher Gerber to intervene in the appeal of the Civil Service Commission decision by Mr. Ron Ladd. **Motion carried.**

13. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Moved** by Ms. Good and seconded by Mr. Wert to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman  
Administrative Assistant