

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
December 9, 2021**

West Reading Borough Council held a special meeting at Borough Hall on Thursday, December 9, 2021 with the following persons present: Council President Jack Gombach; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Samantha Kaag, and Ryan Lineaweaver; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

VISITORS Lauren Marks, Visitor

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Jack Gombach called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, a Moment of Silence, and Roll Call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Marks noted that her husband, Sergeant Chad Marks, would be unable to attend their daughter's Christmas Concert next week because he is scheduled to work and asked if members of Council have spoken to members of the Police Department to inquire as to their position within the department noting that morale is low. Mrs. Marks requested that Council refrain from advertising the Chief of Police position until a conversation has taken place between Council and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

CHIEF OF POLICE SEARCH

Borough Council reviewed the Interim Chief of Police advertisement and requested that the salary range be removed from the advertisement.

Ms. Kaag requested that the timing to apply and interview be scheduled to include the two new Council members that will take their seat in early January.

Mr. Kaag expressed concern regarding the Police Department morale, based on Mrs. Marks comment and wondered if a meeting should be scheduled prior to advertising this position. It was noted that neither the bargaining unit or the Mayor has expressed concerns to Borough Council. A request had been made to expedite the hiring process.

The same process is being followed, which includes the ability for internal candidates to interview for this position. The Interim Chief of Police would assist in plotting a course of action for the department. It was thought that placing an advertisement would be the first step in the hiring process of this short-term position.

Mrs. Marks indicated that she is representing some members within the department, not the FOP. However, members of the department have not approached Borough Council because of a concern of backlash. There is a chain of command that is followed, which is part of their structure, or belief system. She requested that Council meet with the department prior to placing an advertisement. The recent changes in leadership have led to a feeling of instability. Mrs. Marks recommended that the department be involved in the selection process.

It was agreed that scheduling a meeting and advertising the position could take place concurrently. The deadline to apply was moved back one week to Monday, December 27, 2021.

Motion to approve the advertisement of an Interim Chief of Police position with noted revisions.
Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council recessed to executive session at 5:27 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. Council reconvened at 5:50 p.m. and reported that no action was needed at that time.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary