

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP / COUNCIL MEETING**

September 10, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Saturday, September 10, 2022 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; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

VISITORS: Joseph Mountz, Resident (arrived 10:43 a.m.)

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Mr. Lineaweaver stated that an executive session had not been held prior to this meeting.
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** There were no amendments to the agenda needed at this time.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no public comments.

5. **PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET:**

Mr. Grassley presented the Public Works budget noting the following:

Public Works Revenues

- **01-391-430 Sale of Public Works Vehicle(s)** – The planned repurposing of Rescue 64 to a water/sewer maintenance vehicle later this year will allow for the sale of the existing water/sewer maintenance vehicle. The 2023 proposed revenue from this sale is \$5,000. Mr. Grassley noted plans to apply for a \$350,000 grant that would require a 10% match to replace the roughly thirty-year old Mack truck that is used to haul yard waste and to purchase a rubber tire loader that is generally rented to haul away excessive snow. The sale of the grant purchased thirty-year old Mack truck and unused leaf picker would yield 15% of the proceeds to the Borough. A meeting with Jane Meeks of the Berks County Solid Waste Authority is planned on October 6th to finalize the grant application.

Public Works Expenses

- **01-430-130 Salary of Public Works Director** – Mr. Grassley requested a 5% increase to his salary for 2023 while returning to the contracted 3% increase for the remaining four years. Mrs. Rentschler noted that a 3% increase was reflected on the draft worksheet, and a 5% increase would total \$80,150.
- **01-430-140 Crew Wages** – Roughly \$20,000 was saved this year due to Chad Moyer's time associated with the Code Department. The proposed total of 2023 wages were \$570,000 in hopes of hiring an additional crew member and replacing Chad Moyer, both new employees would start at 70% of the base rate of pay. It was noted that concrete work requires the dedication of two workers. Mr. Grassley would like to seek an individual with HVAC experience to maintain the number of aging mechanical systems. Consideration was requested to implement a tiered pay scale system into the union contract to lower expenses by eliminating the requirement of all members to possess a Commercial Driver's License. Mr. Grassley noted that four or five members plan to retire in roughly five-years. Mrs.

Rentschler noted in the description of crew salaries that it should be a crew leader, six crew members and two new hires.

- **01-430-172 Overtime** – A 14% increase was proposed for the 2023 budget totaling \$50,079 based on a potential new hire. It was noted that overtime would probably not be reduced with an additional hire, just distributed differently.
- **01-430-173 Part-Time Help** – Two-part timers were budgeted without an increase in 2023 totaling \$11,520. The hiring of an additional full-time crew member would reduce the number of summer staff hires from two to one.
- **01-430-181 Uniform Allowance** – A 26% increase was proposed for the 2023 budget totaling \$3,000. This was increased in anticipation of an additional crew member and replacement of jackets.
- **01-430-185 Boot Allowance** – Contractually a \$200 pay out two times per year per crew member. The amount budgeted for 2023 was \$4,000.
- **01-430-196 Health and Accident Insurance** – Teamsters composite rate minus employee deduction was budgeted at \$232,400. It was noted that the new hire was included in this amount at the highest level.
- **01-430-243 COVID-19** – A reserve of \$1,500 for COVID-19 supplies was removed.
- **01-430-300 General Expense** – Mr. Grassley noted that the projected year end estimate is roughly \$7,000 over budget in part due to a learning curve and in part due to the added monthly monitoring of Solve IT Solutions. An additional GL Code will be created for communication expenses, such as cell phones, and computer monitoring. Mr. Grassley requested a 20% increase to this line item for 2023 in the amount of \$18,000.
- **01-430-336 Vehicle Replacement** – The second of five annual payments for the bucket truck was projected at \$15,077.
- **01-430-337 Vehicle Maintenance and Repair** – The projected year end estimate is \$7,000 under budget. Mr. Grassley requested consideration to purchase an annual subscription software program to assist the mechanic in troubleshooting and tracking repairs and fleet information that can be shared with all departments. It was felt that this expense could be justified by the time savings for the mechanic. It was also noted that a new mechanic laptop or tablet is needed and could potentially be purchased within this year's budget.
- **01-430-338 Gasoline** – Mr. Grassley anticipates remaining under budget this year even with the increase in gas prices due in part to the conversion to 87-octane gasoline. A 10% increase was projected for 2023 totaling \$15,000.
- **01-430-416 Training Expense** – Training to keep crew member licenses current in pesticide and certified pool operator was budgeted to remain at \$1,250.
- **01-430-740 Major Equipment Purchases** – Mr. Grassley would like to purchase a cut break saw costing roughly \$2,000 to expedite the curb replacement process. A 50% increase was projected in 2023 totaling \$6,000.
- **01-430-750 Minor Equipment Purchases** – Mr. Grassley noted that this line item is over budget this year due to the purchase of concrete tools. A 60% increase was projected in 2023 totaling \$4,000.
- **01-431-374 Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs** – Mr. Grassley reported new tires were needed on the street sweeper for inspection this year and a slight increase to the 2023 budget by 11% to cover expenses on an aging street sweeper.

- **01-431-455 Dumping Leaves** – There has been an increase to the number of residents visiting the garage to drop off yard waste this year. A 5% increase has been budgeted for 2023 totaling \$1,930.
- **01-432-245 Snow and Ice Removal** – Mr. Grassley noted a stockpile of salt for the upcoming winter season. The projected 2023 budget will remain at \$45,000.
- **01-433-245 Traffic Signals and Street Signs** – A new source for street signs has been found with lower prices. In anticipation of upgrading a portion of street signs to a reflective aluminum sign, per federal regulations, the proposed 2023 budget remained at \$7,500.
- **01-433-246 Line Painting** – Street painting costs have risen considerably. The amount budgeted for 2023 was increased 20% to \$4,200.
- **01-433-375 Traffic Signal Maintenance and Repair** – Mr. Murray reported that two outdated traffic signals required upgrades this year to make needed repairs. Therefore, this line item is projected to end the year over budget. In order to maintain the aging traffic signals it was recommended to budget upgrades to one signal per year. The proposed 2023 budget remained at \$12,500.
- **01-438-370 General Maintenance and Repair** – Mr. Grassley noted the recent assistance from the Treasurer's Department to correctly allocate expenses to this line item. This GL Code has exceeded what had been budgeted for 2022. The 2023 budget remained at \$20,000.
- **01-446-300 MS4 Cooperative Agreements** – Mr. Murray noted expenses shared with the Wyomissing Creek Coalition and all MS4 related expenses that funnel through this line item. It has been recommended to install a catch basin in the vicinity of the new community garden to diminish the erosion caused along the waterway. It was recommended to retain the allocation of \$26,250 for the year 2023.
- **01-455-376 Tree Trimming** – Priority tree trimming and removals were addressed this year along Franklin Street, Ann Street and one side of Kent Way. Unused funds that were allocated during the 2021 and 2022 budgets had not been requested to carry through to the following year which has delayed the schedule of maintaining Borough trees. It was thought that if there were additional funds available within the 2023 budget that these funds should be allocated above the proposed \$35,000 budget.
- **01-455-377 Tree Spraying** – Mr. Grassley indicated that funds were not used this year to address hornet nests or lantern fly control. It was recommended to use fertilizer spikes to fertilize trees next year and \$550 was budgeted for 2023.
- **01-455-378 Planting/Replacements** – There were no tree plantings this year and Mr. Grassley requested to carry the 2022 budget funds of \$3,500 to 2023. It was recommended to diversify the tree species to avoid the need to remove all trees from any given area at one time. \$5,000 was budgeted for 2023.
- **01-465-370 Penn Avenue Maintenance and Repairs** – Mr. Murray noted plans to order six larger replacement trash and recycling bins for Penn Avenue, the older trash and recycling bins will be moved to the park area. The proposed 2023 budget was \$6,300.
- **30-400-313 Engineering Capital Expense** – \$31,050 was proposed for the 2023 budget to cover expenses associated with repaving Seventh Avenue from Penn Avenue to Spruce Street.

Joseph Mountz joined the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

- **30-409-000 Building Capital Expenditure** – Mr. Grassley noted that window replacements are planned this year totaling roughly \$25,000 for the basement of the Administration Building and the crank type windows in the Police Department. Mr. Murray noted plans to improve the audio and video equipment in Council Chambers and a new quote that was received totaling just under \$13,000. Mr. Murray noted plans to repair the lower retaining wall at Borough Hall next year. The proposed 2023 budget was \$40,000.
- **30-430-000 Highways Capital Expenditure** – An estimate of \$140,000 to repave South Seventh Avenue, and \$70,000 to repave Sycamore Road from Parkview Road to South Fifth Avenue. Grape Street was not repaved in 2022 to allow time to determine if the underground tunnel between the elementary school and Franklin Manor has been filled for stability purposes. Mr. Murray intends to meet with school officials to gather information. The proposed 2023 budget was \$345,000.

The Public Works Department budget portion of the meeting ended at 11:10 a.m. and a break in the meeting took place until 11:22 a.m.

6. **RECREATION BUDGET:**

Recreation Revenues

Mrs. Moyer reviewed the 2023 Recreation budget noting the following:

- **90-367-115 Field Rental** – Mrs. Moyer noted the 2022-year end estimate of \$400 is under the budgeted \$6,090 due to cancellation of the softball and little league programs, the reduced number of Concert in the Park events, and the incorrect allocation of revenues that will be corrected.
- **90-367-200 Pool Receipts** – The year end estimate of revenue is \$91,303, which is below the budgeted \$98,140. Mrs. Moyer noted that memberships were down this year but daily passes had increased. The proposed budget for 2023 is \$90,000.
- **90-367-204 Pool Special Event Receipts** – Due to the lack of staffing to book special events and the cancellation of the Moonlight Swim the year end estimate is \$850. The proposed 2023 budget is \$1,300.
- **90-367-206 Water Class Receipts** – Mrs. Moyer indicated that only one instructor was available which limited the amount of revenue generated by \$1,000. The 2023 proposed revenue is \$2,500.
- **90-367-300 Playground Fees** - \$20,835 was generated of the budgeted \$31,000 due to a limit being placed on the number of registrations accepted by the previous director. The proposed 2023 budget is \$31,000.
- **90-367-370 Pickleball Program** – It was noted that this contract is currently being reviewed by the solicitor and a determination will need to be made as to whether there should be reimbursements for program costs as no revenue was received in 2022.
- **90-367-400 Pool Concessions** - \$25,000 of the budgeted \$35,654 was generated. It was thought that minimizing the number of menu items and rounding the dollar amount up to avoid the use of coins would be beneficial. Mrs. Moyer indicated that a Chromebook would be purchased for use at the Concession stand to process credit card payments to avoid use of the honor system. Roughly half way through the season this was discovered and then

staff began requiring the patrons to show proof of payment. The 2023 proposed budget is \$25,000.

- **90-367-805 Event Sponsors** – Vendor truck, karaoke, and disc golf revenue was projected to generate \$2,500 in 2023.
- **90-367-808 Haunted House & Hayride** – A smaller event is planned this year due to the lack of a director that may not generate revenue. The proposed revenue for 2023 is \$3,900.
- **90-367-815 4th of July** – It was noted that the Recreation Commission members were not committed to devoting a lot of volunteered time during this holiday. Pool games, music, beer truck and a drone show were ideas for an event without fireworks. Ms. Drobnick noted that the Recreation Commission may coordinate a concert in the park type event near the 4th of July holiday. Revenue for 2023 is projected at \$3,000.
- **90-392-001 Transfer from General Fund** – The transfer of general funds to balance the Recreation budget is \$175,000.

Recreation Expenses

- **90-451-110 Harvest Hayride** - \$300 was the year end estimate to cover the cost of a DJ for the smaller Halloween event. \$2,000 is proposed for 2023.
- **90-451-113 4th of July** - \$12,000 was proposed for 2023 should Council decide to offer a drone show or any other features.
- **90-451-187 Recreation Director** - \$50,000 has been allocated for a full-time Recreation Director. The salary range is \$42,000 to \$50,000 depending on experience and qualifications.
- **90-451-431 Community Special Events** – Expenses associated with the tree lighting ceremony and Easter flowers were reduced from \$5,000 to \$3,000 for 2023.
- **90-452-023 Pool Equipment** – \$2,225 was budgeted for 2023 for the purchase of a Chromebook and credit card swipe for the Concession stand and to replace the damaged lifeguard tubes. It was recommended to assign a tube to each lifeguard and at the end of the season if the tube has been unnecessarily damaged, the employee would then be liable to fund replacement.
- **90-452-181 Pool Wages** – The year end estimate of \$65,000 is below the budgeted \$70,000. It was recommended to increase wages next year to attract managers with experience. \$81,000 was budgeted for 2023.
- **90-452-182 Concession Wages** – The year end estimate of \$18,000 exceeded the budgeted \$13,369 due to the need to train new staff throughout the summer.
- **90-452-300 General Expenses** – Food license and pool certification fees will need to be reallocated. The proposed 2023 budget will remain at \$400.
- **90-452-321 Concession Supplies** – Permits and food supplies exceeded the budget by \$1,500. The proposed 2023 budget will remain at \$15,500.
- **90-452-370 Repair & Maintenance Buildings & Supplies** – This line item is shared with Public Works for general improvements and repairs. The proposed 2023 budget amount is \$12,850, reduced from the 2022 budgeted amount of \$17,850.
- **90-452-374 Repairs & Maintenance Equipment** – The baby pool volute must be replaced next year. Even though the year end estimate is \$10,000, it was recommended to continue to budget \$35,000 for unexpected repairs.
- **90-452-530 Pool Electric** – Due to electric rate increases the proposed 2023 budget was increased from 11,550 to \$20,000.

- **90-452-531 Pool Chemicals** – Due to increased expenses the amount budgeted for 2023 was increased from \$13,440 to \$17,500.
- **90-453-037 Pickleball Expenses** – The \$3,360 estimated year end expense for porta potties was increased to \$3,500 for next year.
- **90-453-180 Uniforms** – T-shirts for playground staff arrived late and were not used this year. These T-shirts will be used next year lowering the proposed 2023 budget from \$750 to \$200.
- **90-453-181 Child Playground T-Shirts** – These T-shirts also arrived late this year and were not used. \$100 is budgeted for next year.
- **90-453-183 Playground Wages** – The 2022 wages came in roughly \$6,000 under budget. \$24,000 was carried through for the 2023 budget.
- **30-450-000 Recreation Capital Expenditure** – Pool paint had been purchased this year but arrived too late to apply. Painting of the pool is planned in the spring of 2023. The expense to repaint the Pavilion area can be done in house and the cost was reduced from \$15,000 to \$1,000. Mr. Grassley is awaiting quotes from fence companies to install additional black fencing around the pool. Mrs. Moyer indicated that the chair lift must be replaced for next year. An amount needs to be allocated for 2023.

Mrs. Moyer shared proposed rate increases for next year for the playground program and Bicentennial House and Pavilion rentals. Mr. Lineaweaver requested a breakdown of resident versus non-resident and full-day versus half-day playground registrations. It was recommended to increase the key/cleaning deposit fee from \$100 to \$150. Pool rates were recommended to be reviewed to be in line with neighboring municipal pools. It was noted that program and staff consistency define a quality program.

7. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Mr. Lineaweaver referred to the one action item for today regarding Concerts in the Park. Mayor Kaag shared details of a request from Berks Arts as a non-profit entity to waive fees as allegedly promised by the previous Recreation Director. Berks Arts claims to bring a net benefit to the community through their Concert in the Park and Scottish Rite Cathedral events. Berks Arts is again requesting a refund of the fees paid for the August event and waiving the fee for tomorrow's event. Mr. Murray indicated that the Berks Arts representative was confrontational over the phone and staff needed to follow up on numerous occasions to obtain the required documentation. Mayor Kaag noted that the August event was not well advertised or attended. Mayor Kaag recommended that a cost analysis be completed by the Ad Hoc Event Committee to avoid waiving all fees for non-profit requests.

Motion to waive fees associated with the September 11, 2022 Concert in the Park event and deny the request to refund fees associated with the August 21, 2022 Concert in the Park event. **Moved** Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mr. Mountz inquired as to fireworks displays for future 4th of July events. Mr. Lineaweaver explained the inability to provide a worthy firework display while maintaining the required separation distances between mortar and spectators per the National Fire Protection Association regulations.

Mr. Mountz inquired as to where he could find information on the Disc Golf Tournament. Mr. Kaag noted the event will take place on Black Friday, November 25th, and more information would be available on Facebook.

Ms. Drobnick departed the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

Mr. Wert provided an update to the noise disturbance issue on Riverfront Drive noting that Norfolk Southern Railroad had been alerted to the history of trespassing on railroad property. Norfolk Southern has already placed concrete barriers to deter future trespassing upon their property.

8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:42 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary