

BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP/COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 10, 2018

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Saturday, November 10, 2018 with the following persons present: Council President Nicholas Imbesi; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Christopher Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson; Police Chief Stephen Powell; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Recreation Director Helen Moyer; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Financial Consultant Donal Renninger; Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman; and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira. Council Members Kirk Mullen, Nicholas Gardecki and David Amato were unable to attend.

VISITORS PRESENT: Oswald Herbert, Resident
Andrew Moletress, Treasurer WRCRF

CALL TO ORDER:

Council President Nicholas Imbesi called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

ORDINANCES:

- Ordinance 1096 – 2018 International Property Maintenance Code
- Ordinance 1097 – Off-Street Metered Parking
- Ordinance 1098 – Handicapped Parking

Motion to adopt Ordinances 1096, 1097, and 1098. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 4-0.**

HANDICAPPED PARKING:

Chief Powell noted a recent request for a handicapped parking space in the vicinity of 166 Franklin Street for a terminally ill individual and recommended installation of a handicapped parking space for a six month period, until which time the need for the space can be reviewed and included in the annual handicapped parking space ordinance amendment. Mayor Kearney agreed to the temporary installation of a handicapped parking space in this vicinity.

2019 DRAFT BUDGET

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT:

Mr. Imbesi presented the Code Enforcement Department proposed 2019 budget.

- 01-413-210 Supplies / Equipment was reduced from \$2,000 to \$1,500, which was based on the history of expenditures.
- 01-413-401 Code Department Administration remains at \$171,089 for the 2019 budget due to reduced staffing capability experienced during 2018.
- 01-413-740 Major Equipment Purchases was reduced from \$3,000 to \$1,500 to purchase one desktop computer.
- 01-413-750 Minor Equipment purchases totaling \$1,000 was removed based on the history of expenditures.

Mrs. Hoffman made a recommendation to budget \$35,000 for one full-time person to lead the department for the last half of 2019. This individual would provide leadership for the department, including the third-party staff and be designated as the Zoning Officer. This would remove the expense incurred for the current one-day per week third-party Zoning Officer.

Ms. Thompson recommended exploration of options to hire an alternate engineering firm. Chief Burkholder noted issues experienced recently with missed Knox box installation requirements prior to issuance of use and occupancy certificates. Mrs. Hoffman indicated the necessity of better oversight and control of the department by hiring an individual employed by the Borough that would be best suited for that position.

ELM STREET AND MAIN STREET:

Mr. Imbesi presented the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation proposed 2019 Budget.

Elm Street:

- 01-462-045 DCED Planning Grant – A grant application was submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) that would require a \$25,000 match, which would be funded by the Wyomissing Foundation.
- 01-462-046 Facades Grant – A grant application was submitted to DCED that would require a \$25,000 match, which would be funded by the Wyomissing Foundation.
- 01-462-545 Elm Street Operating Expense – a 3% increase was proposed for the Elm Street Manager salary totaling \$41,599. Discussions regarding the reconfiguration of staffing has begun and Council agreed to retain this amount within the budget in the event that a new Elm Street Manager is hired.

Main Street:

- 01-465-300 Main Street Operating Expense remained at \$42,000.

BUDGET EXPENSES UNDER CONSIDERATION:

General Fund:

- 01-410-750 Police Department Minor Equipment Purchases was reduced from \$3,000 to \$2,500 for the purchase of criminal code books and copier parts.

Capital Fund:

- 30-410-000 Police Department Capital Expense was reduced from \$32,000 to \$26,000 since the camera for the Sixth and Penn Avenue intersection was installed during 2018.

Recreation Fund:

- 90-452-022 Maintenance / Repairs was reduced from \$2,500 to \$750 to replace the wood frames and window cranks for the Pavilion windows.
- 90-452-370 Maintenance / Repairs for buildings and supplies was discussed at length. Mrs. Moyer provided an order of importance for the following items:
 1. Refrigeration
 2. Fencing – In an effort to deter illegal access to the pool area, installation of a higher chain link fence was suggested at an expense of \$10,000. Council discussed installation of a higher quality fence once funds are available and recommended adding to the existing fence in the front of the Pool House at a cost of approximately \$5,000. Mr. Murray will provide a more definitive cost to perform this task.
 3. Camera System – Council discussed less expensive options to monitor activity outside of regular operating hours to reduce the expenditure of \$2,500. A less expensive non-commercial grade camera system was discussed as well as motion censored lighting. Costs for these two options will be explored.
 4. Repoint Deck – In an effort to retain the slate character of the Pavilion deck an \$8,000 expenditure to repoint the deck area was requested. Council agreed to continue patching the deck area as needed during 2019.

The revisions noted above provided an updated budget deficit of \$813,338. Mrs. Rentschler noted an approximate 10% surplus in the water and sewer fund accounts. Ms. Renninger recommended not to deplete the water and sewer fund account surplus to lessen the deficit.

Mr. Wert suggested requesting projected Berks Earned Income Tax revenues and updated tax assessment of Borough properties to reflect a more accurate amount of revenue that would be generated during 2019.

The information gathered will be discussed during the next Finance Committee meeting and requests for further budget cuts will be shared with the individual departments to avoid a line by line review of further budget cuts. Advertisement of the draft budget should take place by November 27, 2018 with adoption of a 2019 Budget during the December 18, 2018 Council meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council recessed to executive session at 11:25 a.m. to discuss a contract item. Council reconvened at 11:37 a.m. with no action being taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:37 a.m. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Manager