

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

Special Meeting

December 10, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held a special meeting with the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (CRF) at Borough Hall on Wednesday, December 10, 2014 with the following persons present: Council Vice President Philip C. Wert; Vice President; Council Members, Carl Garman, Elizabeth L. Heckler, Deborah Hutcheson, Nathalie R. Kulesa; Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr. and Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler. Grace Craze and James J. Gallen, Jr. were unable to attend. The following CRF Board members and staff were in attendance: CRF President Dr. Mark G. Dougherty; Vice President Philip C. Wert; members, Rebecca J. Doubek, Robin Horman, Deborah Hutcheson, Valentin Rodriguez, Jr., Richard J. Sichler, and John Woodward; and Solicitor Joan E. London, Esq.

VISITORS:	Jim Livingood	Resident
	Suzanne Thompson	Resident
	Eileen & Keith Fox	Residents
	Glen Styer	Resident
	Becca Gregg	Reading Eagle
	Susan Keen	Reading Eagle

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

Council Vice President Phil Wert called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. and performed a roll call.

2. **CRF DISCUSSION:**

Dr. Dougherty thanked everyone for their attendance and explained that the meeting was arranged at the suggestion of Council President Gallen. Dr. Dougherty emphasized that the meeting was not for the purpose of terminating Mr. Dean Rohrbach.

Ms. London explained that the meeting was intended to be a joint personnel meeting and that just prior to the meeting Mr. Rohrbach had delivered a letter with a request to invoke his right to have his personnel issues discussed at an open meeting. Ms. London expressed that the CRF will respect his wishes in this regard. Ms. London stated that at a recent Borough budget meeting Mr. Rohrbach had brought a number of issues pertaining to the CRF forward and that this meeting would seek to address some of these issues.

Dr. Dougherty explained that a packet of communications has been handed out to council members for their review. Ms. London explained that the content of these email exchanges are of concern to the CRF. Mayor Rodriguez asked if Exhibit A in the packet was a release of confidential CRF executive session material. Ms. London replied that it was not.

Mr. Woodward stated that Mr. Rohrbach has put the CRF board in an awkward position with his communications. He explained he personally and the board have done everything possible to help Mr. Rohrbach in these matters.

Mr. Garman asked if the CRF had ever called Mr. Rohrbach in to discuss his insubordination. Ms. London replied that yes, he has been counseled. Dr. Dougherty stated that Mr. Rohrbach had admitted inappropriate behavior and that four board members have counseled Mr. Rohrbach on the issues. A discussion of the counselling that was provided ensued. Mr. Garman asked why the CRF's issues with Dean were allowed to drag on and were not handled promptly. Dr. Dougherty replied it

was because of Mr. Rohrbach positive results and wide spread support that he was given multiple chances to improve his job performance.

Ms. Kulesa asked if Mr. Rohrbach had been provided any help. CRF members explained that there is another CRF employee that does help in the performance of the work and that CRF board members have both helped in the performance of day to day tasks and have routinely offered to provide additional assistance. It was expressed that Mr. Rohrbach would at times decline help or state that he did not need any.

Mr. Garman asked that since Mr. Rohrbach has been able to show results, why hasn't the CRF thought outside of the box. Ms. Doubek replied that the reason for the meeting is to improve the communication of ideas and issues. A discussion of how things were communicated between Council and the CRF in the past ensued.

Mayor Rodriguez spoke about finalizing the draft cooperation agreement as a means of improving the working relationship between the two groups and that a Borough committee is working on revisions to this document. A discussion of the previous drafts of the agreement and possible items that should be contained in the final version ensued. Mr. Garman summarized that Council wants to insure that the money it invests in the CRF is spent wisely and with the Borough's knowledge of what it is being spent on. Ms. London stated that the Borough and CRF relationship can be viewed as a clean slate.

Mayor Rodriguez and Mr. Garman asked where the money budgeted by the CRF for a Main Street Manger, a position that has not been filled, has been going. Ms. Doubek explained that those monies have been and are going to operational expenses.

Council members raised questions about the Property Acquisition, Rehabilitation, & Resell (PARR) program and Mr. Rohrbach's involvement in it. CRF board members explained that the PARR program is a CRF project that Mr. Rohrbach is involved in. It was relayed that all CRF board members are involved in the PARR program and that Mr. Woodward and Mr. Moletress are involved on a day to day basis.

Ms. London concluded the CRF discussion by stating that the CRF is not going to be taking action regarding the employment of any employee or Mr. Rohrbach, that the beginnings of an improved line of communication has been accomplished, and that Borough Council now better understands the current personnel situation.

3. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Richard J. Sichler
Borough Manager