

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

January 18, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, January 18, 2011 with the following persons present: Council President Kevin Conrad; Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members James Gallen, Amy Good-Ashman, Elizabeth Heckler, Deborah Hutcheson; Mayor Shane Keller; Borough Manager Richard Sichler; Police Chief Edward Fabriziani; Socrates Georgeadis, Kozloff Stoudt; Chief Code Enforcement Officer Tracey Levering; Assistant Code Enforcement Officer John Wascavage; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Recreation Coordinator Daphne Klahr; Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach; Administrative Assistant Cathy Hoffman; Darryl Jenkins, Great Valley Consultants. Absent: Nathalie Kulesa.

<u>VISITORS:</u>	Ruth Cardell	Temple
	Tina Shenk	Business/Property Owner
	Rebecca Keller	Resident
	Larry Lloyd	Berks Conservancy
	Audrey Schaeffer	Resident
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Darrin Youcker	Reading Eagle

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

PUBLIC COMMENT - There was no public comment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Larry Lloyd of the Berks County Conservancy presented a brief presentation concerning Environmental Advisory Councils and noted that there are currently 18 in Berks County alone. The Berks County Conservancy assists municipalities in forming EACs and Mr. Lloyd gave many ideas for projects that the Borough can undertake, such as education projects, open space protection, develop green space and trails, identify lands to acquire, land management, recycling projects, etc. He also commended the Borough for having such active Recreation and Shade Tree Commissions.

Discussion ensued regarding how to proceed and Mr. Wert said there were several people in the Borough who are willing to serve on an EAC. It was suggested that the proposed EAC be comprised of representatives of the Planning Commission, Council, Shade Tree Commission, Recreation Commission, etc. It was also noted that Amber Rambo and Michael Morrill had already agreed to be part of an EAC.

It was decided that a list of specific recommendations be brought to Council at the February meeting, and that a resolution be prepared to form and appoint the Environmental Advisory Council for the Borough.

Solicitor's Report - Mr. Georgeadis stated that the former tax collector for the Borough, Mr. Stiber, has an overage of funds that need to be paid equally to the Borough and the County. He requested permission to begin the process to retrieve the funds which he expects Mr. Stiber will fully cooperate with, however if he does not, legal action will be taken. **Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs.

Heckler to authorize Mr. Georgeadis to act on the Borough's behalf to acquire the excess funds from the former tax collector. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Georgeadis also stated that he had reviewed the hospital contract with Mr. Sichler, as well as sewer funds. He noted that Mr. Sichler will have a recommendation regarding the sewer funds.

Concerning Mr. Herbert's judgment, Mr. Georgeadis noted that it is proceeding however there are some title issues that are being worked through.

Ordinance 994 was introduced, which fixes the general tax (5.5 mills) and fire tax (1.6 mills) rates for 2011. It was noted that neither tax rate has been increased from the 2010 rates. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve Ordinance 944. **Motion carried.**

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

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the minutes of December 21, 2010 (regular session), December 28, 2010 (budget) and January 6, 2011 (budget). **Motion carried.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Zoning Ordinance pertaining to fences – Mr. Wert reported that the Planning Commission is working on the fencing portion of the Zoning Ordinance and expects to have a recommendation within the next few months. He added that there are other issues that the Commission may recommend to change to coincide with the Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Water and Sewer Rates – Mr. Jenkins stated that he has completed the review with proposed rates that will make the funds self sufficient. Mr. Sichler will forward the information to Council for review, then the rates will be decided at the February Council meeting.

Penn Avenue Streetscape Improvements – Mr. Sichler said that he has had one meeting with a designer and has scheduled another. He expects to have a draft prepared for next month.

Parking Permit Areas – Mr. Conrad stated that the Traffic Commission is working on the issue with input from the residents of the Spruce Street area that attended the January 10th meeting

CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:

Engineer's Report – Mr. Jenkins said that there were no action items, but referred to his written report. It was noted that this was Mr. Jenkins' last meeting with Council as he would be moving to a new company. Mr. Conrad thanked Mr. Jenkins for the work that he has done for the Borough over the last five years. Mr. Jenkins assured Council that it has always been a team approach with the Borough and there are other members of GVC that will ensure continuity. He added that he has always enjoyed working with the Borough and has felt like a member of the staff.

Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to accept the Engineer's report. **Motion carried.**

APPOINTMENTS:

Moved by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Mr. Gallen to reappoint the following persons:

Recreation Commission - Karen Livingood, Susie Tranquillo, Ambyr Elsasser (2 year)

Fire Department – Mark Burkholder, Chief; Jim Beane, Deputy Chief; Chad Moyer, Assistant Chief;

Jeffrey Reinert, Captain; Jason Witman, Lieutenant; Helen Moyer, Lieutenant. (all 1 year appointments)

Fire Marshall - Jason Ganster (1 year)

Emergency Management Coordinator - Tom Bausher (1 year)

Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator - Ed Fabriziani (1 year)

Emergency Management Board - Shane Keller, Kevin Conrad (1 year)

Joint Municipal Authority - William Gernert (5 year)

Zoning Hearing Board - Sam Heim (5 year)

Housing Review Board - Elizabeth Heckler (3 year)

Main Street – Philip Wert (5 year)

Police Pension Fund Committee - Kevin Conrad (3 year)

Vacancy Board - Mark Burkholder (1 year)

Motion carried.

It was noted that clarification was required for the Business Privilege Tax Collector, the Western Berks Refuse Authority, and the Police Pension Fund Committee (Kevin Duncan). The Council Committee appointments will be made separately by Mr. Conrad.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:

Mr. Sichler stated that the insurance renewal rates for 2011 had just been received, and in comparison with the 2010 rates, the Borough will save approximately \$42,000 which is mostly due to the improved rating with Workers' Compensation as well as the switch to a municipal provider. He also noted that in order to get this rate the Borough must join the Susquehanna Municipal Trust, therefore Mr. Georgeadis has been asked to review the accompanying resolution that must be approved.

Notification has been received that the Borough has been awarded a \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant for the installation of ADA curb ramps throughout the Borough. The engineer estimates that with this funding, we should be able to install between 10 and 15 ramps. A list of locations for the ramps to be installed will be prepared. Mr. Sichler noted that the grant will not cover engineering fees for the project so there will be a cost to the Borough.

Mr. Sichler reported that the refuse and recycling fund has been carrying a balance from year to year and currently has a balance of \$322,000. Mr. Georgeadis has determined that there is no perceived need to retain that balance in anticipation of future legal action therefore it has been suggested to transfer some of those funds to the General Fund to act as a much needed cushion. Mr. Conrad said he would like to see the funds transferred to a separate line item that can only be used with a majority vote of Council.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Gallen to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Motion carried.**

MAYOR'S REPORT AND MAIN STREET REPORT:

Mayor Keller stated that although no snow emergencies have been declared during the recent snow and ice storms, residents are removing their vehicles from the snow emergency routes which has been of great assistance to the Borough Crew.

A letter has been received from Diane Price, chair of Berks County Armed Forces Advisory Committee, asking if they will have the support of the Borough for the Armed Forces Day Parade which is scheduled for Saturday, May 21st 2011. The letter also noted that if the Borough has any fiscal issues as a result of having the parade in the Borough, they will need to know the approximate amount by their January 30th meeting. It was noted that the Police Department incurs approximately \$2000 in overtime on parade day.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to support the Armed Forces Day Parade. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to accept the Mayor's report. **Motion carried.**

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Code Enforcement – Mrs. Levering presented her written report and it was noted that approximately 45 tickets were written as a result of property owners not clearing their sidewalks after the past two storms.

Proposed changes to the current fee schedule were discussed including alarm permit fees, fire tap-in fees, rental reinspection fees, and burn permit fees. The special event permit fee was discussed, however because of the impact it may have with non-profit organizations, it was decided to put it on hold for now. It was also stated that a definition for "storage trailer" be included in the ordinance.

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve Resolution 2011-1, based on the fee scheduled as distributed to Council, with the exception of the fire tap-in, amusement license and special event permit fees. **Motion carried.**

Mrs. Levering introduced John Wascavage who was recently hired as the Assistant Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Wascavage spoke briefly about his prior code enforcement experience and his certifications.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to accept the Chief Code Enforcement Officer's report. **Motion carried.**

Police Department – Chief Fabrizio spoke about various issues that have occurred in the Borough recently, including a domestic stabbing, an assault on a bus, and a home invasion and robbery. He also noted that regarding the business robberies that occurred last year, Detective Brown has been working

with Wyomissing detectives and the federal attorneys' office to determine if the 14 robberies will fit the criteria for federal charges.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to accept the Police Chief's Report. **Motion carried.**

Fire Department – Chief Burkholder presented his written report which was distributed at the meeting.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to accept the Fire Chief's report. **Motion carried.**

Public Works – Mr. Murray presented his written report. **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to accept the Public Works Director's report. **Motion carried.**

Elm Street – Mr. Rohrbach stated that he had no action items, however he noted that his DCED application for designation for the new Center Point neighborhood was declined. He noted that only one designation is given per year. He added that the Wyomissing Foundation is going to step in to provide funding for at least the first year. Regarding the 10 Points Neighborhood, Mr. Rohrbach stated that there is \$205,000 in DCED funds to be spent in that area this year. He also stated he will be rewriting the Residential Reinvestment Plan for the Center Point Neighborhood.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to accept the Elm Street Manager's Report. **Motion carried.**

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:

Safety Committee – **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to accept the Safety Committee report. **Motion carried.**

Recreation Commission – Ms. Klahr announced that West Reading is the recipient of the Innovative Program of the Year Award which is presented by the Pennsylvania Youth Task Force for the "Marines and Me" program.

Regarding the fireworks for the July 4th holiday, Ms. Klahr stated that funds are available in her budget, but wanted Council's approval to go forward. She added that \$4000 has been pledged as donations. Council discussed the other events that are held in conjunction with the fireworks, such as the DJ, entertainment, etc. It was noted that line item 90-453-431 has \$21,935 budgeted for community and special events. Because the expenditure is more than \$10,000 it requires Council's approval, therefore a motion was requested. Mr. Conrad made a motion to move forward and book the fireworks, but due to lack of a seconder, the motion died. Mr. Conrad noted that the lack of fireworks last year was the single most complained about item he has received. Further discussion ensued and Ms. Good-Ashman noted that this was discussed during the budget process and it was decided to budget for the fireworks, therefore she stated her willingness to second the motion. **Moved** by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to move forward and book the fireworks. **Voting yes:** Ms. Hutcheson, Mr. Gallen, Ms. Good-Ashman, Mr. Wert. **Voting no:** Mrs. Heckler. **Motion carried.**

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

Planning Commission – Mr. Wert stated that the Planning Commission is making headway with the fence regulation discussions and the official map. **Moved** by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to accept the Planning Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

Traffic Committee – **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the Traffic Committee report. **Motion carried.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the revenue report for the 12 months ending December 31, 2010. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve the Payment Approval Report for 12/22/10 to 1/14/11. **Motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS: Ms. Good-Ashman requested that the issue concerning restrictions for landlords be kept at the forefront.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council recessed to Executive Session at 8:22 p.m. to discuss personnel and contractual issues. When Council reconvened at 8:35 p.m. no action was taken.

Additional items:

Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to authorize Mr. Conrad to sign the Berks County Tax Claim Bureau Certification of Uncollected Real Estate Taxes (which enables the Deputy Tax Collector to release the funds to the Borough). **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to move forward with the insurances as presented by the Borough Manager under the 2011-2012 rates. **Motion carried.**

ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant