

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

**July 19, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Denise Drobnick, and Zachary Shaver; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Chief of Police Wayne Holben; Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Borough Manager Dean Murray (via Zoom); Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliffe; Police Officer Nicholas Karetas (via Zoom); Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln, Engineer Tom Unger, and Code Department Manager Cathy Hoffman were unable to attend.

**VISITORS:**

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| James Rogers, Resident  | Karen Livingood, Resident (via Zoom) |
| Patrick Shields, Pickleball Association                       | Richard Johnson, Pollen Consolidated |
| Stephanie Zechman, Wyomissing Area Youth Football Association |                                      |

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**  
Mr. Lineaweaver noted an executive session that was held at 6:00 p.m. this evening to discuss personnel matters and pending litigation.
3. **PRESENTATIONS:**
  - a. **Pickleball Update:** Patrick Shields noted the mission of the West Reading Pickleball Association to enhance the community through Pickleball. A variety of features are offered to accommodate all skill levels such as leagues, camps, and beginner tournaments. The Pickleball Association is a standalone entity that raises funds to maintain the pickleball courts and offer programs to the community. Mr. Shields stated that additional board members are needed but he is pleased with the progress. Future plans to tier the area behind the courts for natural plateaus for seating and tents is being reviewed. A tournament is scheduled during the weekend of October 1 that will attract roughly two-hundred visitors. Mr. Shields inquired as to which types of events require a thirty-day notice for Council approval. He understands that larger events such as tournaments that could potentially conflict with other events or require services such as staffing, increased onsite amenities, or approval of food or beer vendors would need prior approval. However, smaller programs such as a Friday evening under age 30 matchup or a Sunday fun family feud that may attract less than twenty people would not require additional services were thought to be unnecessary to require approvals. Mr. Becker noted that the definition of event would be anything that is organized and indicated that the agreement could be reviewed for possible amendments. In the absence of a Recreation Director, the Chair of the Recreation Commission, Ms. Drobnick, will be included in notifications of West Reading Pickleball Association Board meetings that currently meet according to Mr. Shields schedule.  
  
Mr. Shields departed the meeting at 7:20 p.m.
  - b. **Berks Arts / Pollen Consolidated Concerts in the Park:** Richard Johnson of Pollen Consolidated noted their new partnership with Berks Arts and their attendance to a recent

Recreation Commission meeting to request permission to host two Concert in the Park events this year on Sunday, August 21 and Sunday, September 11 from 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. These professional, family fun events are held at the pavilion facing the field with two bands (a local and a regional band), local food vendors, live art features, games such as corn hole and kickball, and a beer garden. Security personnel are onsite with the use of a bracelet system for the beer garden. The partnership with Berks Arts will provide a larger showcase of Berks County parks next year.

- c. **Wyomissing Area School District Parade and Bonfire:** Stephanie Zechman requested permission to host a parade beginning at the West Reading Elementary School and ending at the playground for a bonfire on Friday, October 7, 2022. In an attempt to build momentum of this event local food vendors were requested. It was noted that food vendors would require a special event permit. Mrs. Moyer noted that traditionally the pavilion and field rental fees are paid by the association and the parade and bonfire fees have been waived.

Motion to approve the parade and bonfire event on Friday, October 7, 2022 and to waive the parade and bonfire fees associated with this event. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Ms. Zechman and Mr. Johnson departed the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

#### 4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers noted his attendance to a recent Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting and his previous recommendation to convert all intersections approaching the traffic circle to stop intersections. He now understands that stopping traffic that approaches from Fifth Avenue could create a backup onto Penn Avenue during heavier travel times. His new recommendation is to create a stop intersection at the remaining five approaches to the traffic circle and that the Mayor institute a temporary trial of this recommended change. Mayor Kaag noted that she will be working with the Borough Manager once he returns from vacation on implementing changes to the traffic circle.

Mr. Rogers noted changing times with recent reports of City residents modifying their front door access to prevent break-ins. From an emergency safety standpoint Mr. Rogers recommended adding something to the Borough's ordinances to prevent West Reading residents from making these modifications.

In light of the recent school shooting incident in Texas, Mr. Rogers inquired as to whether super shields are available to police officers in Berks County. Chief Holben indicated that shields are available in all patrol cars and that proactive training is practiced via regular visits to the two school buildings during various times of day to remain familiar with the facilities, students and faculty. As a school teacher Mr. Wert noted the regular training efforts that are provided to faculty to effectively respond to situations similar to that of the recent Texas shooting. Mayor Kaag assured Mr. Rogers that the department has the connections necessary to protect the two school facilities and are cognizant of mental health issues.

#### 5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the June 21, 2022 regular meeting minutes. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance – Parking Prohibited at All Times** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted amendments to Section 430-21.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of amendments to Section 430-21 Parking Prohibited at All Times. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Ordinance – No Winter Maintenance** – Mr. Lineaweaver listed the streets to be included in the section that are too narrow to provide winter maintenance.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of the list of roadways designated as non-maintained routes. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **CONSULTANT'S REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker stated that he had nothing new to report that is not otherwise covered on the agenda.

- b. **Engineer's Report** – In Mr. Unger's absence Mr. Lineaweaver noted an action item to consider a payment application to Utilities Services Group Inc. for the sanitary sewer cleaning and inspection project. It was noted that the storm sewer repairs could be completed in-house. The sanitary sewer repairs were estimated by the engineer to cost roughly \$150,000.

Motion to approve a payment application to Utilities Services Group, Inc. in the amount of \$15,725.65 for the sanitary and storm sewer cleaning and inspection project. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

8. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

- a. **Noise Nuisance** – Mr. Lineaweaver publicly thanked the City of Reading Council for their legislative efforts to address the noise disturbances in the area along Riverfront Drive. It is unclear as to whether this will deter the noise disturbances but it was noted that the last two Sunday's have been relatively quiet. Mr. Wert requested clarification as to a clause that notes a mutual-aid agreement that appears to allow the West Reading Police Department to respond to these types of violation calls. It was thought that the City of Reading has mutual-aid agreements in place with other bordering areas that share enforcement duties. Chief Holben indicated that a call for backup would be responded to. Mayor Kaag understands that the river provides more of a divide between the City of Reading and Borough of West Reading with regards to enforcement, and indicated that she would request clarification. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that the legislation includes the ability to confiscate or seize noise making devices with the potential for destruction of the same. Curbing in the area has been painted yellow to prohibit parking, and provisions were added to allow them to clear parking spaces owned by the City or Redevelopment Authority outside of normal business hours. This legislation was unanimously approved by City Council and signed by the Mayor. Mr. Lineaweaver again thanked the City of Reading for moving forward with legislation and working together.

Motion to accept the Council President's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

9. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Lineaweaver reviewed the following Borough Manager action items:

- a. **Resignations** – Acceptance of resignations of the Recreation Director and Concession Stand Manager.

Motion to accept the resignation of Recreation Director Christine Boud and Concession Stand Manager Mary Ricchiuti. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Recreation Seasonal Staffing** – Ratification of the following promotion and new hires were requested:

- Promote Arianna Davis from Assistant Concession Stand Manager to Concession Stand Manager and retroactively adjust the rate of pay from \$10.50/hr. to \$12.50/hr.
- Hire Jada Smart – Concession Stand at \$9.00/hr.
- Hire Isabella Becker – Concession Stand at \$9.00/hr.
- Hire Nickolas Hoffman – Concession Stand at \$9.00/hr.
- Hire Madison Fisher – Lifeguard at \$9.50/hr.
- Hire Mary Esterbrook – Lifeguard at \$9.50/hr.
- Hire Lynn Greer – Lifeguard at \$10.50/hr.
- Hire Lauren Wells – Lifeguard at \$10.50/hr.
- Hire Gabriella Sanchez – Playground Leader at \$9.00/hr.

Motion to ratify the promotion and hiring of Recreation Seasonal Staff as presented. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Police Authorization** – Ratification of the authorization to provide Fire Police services to Wyomissing Borough.

Motion to ratify the authorization to provide Fire Police services to the Borough of Wyomissing for their 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Conditional Use Hearing Decision** – Approval was requested of the Holcomb Associates, Inc. written decision for conditional use of 401 Buttonwood Street.

Motion to approve the Holcomb Associates, Inc. 401 Buttonwood Street Conditional Use Decision. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Concerts in the Park** – Approval was requested for the two proposed Concerts in the Park events as presented by Mr. Johnson earlier this evening. Ms. Drobnick asked Mr. Becker if she needed to recuse herself from this vote since she was asked to sponsor these events as a State Farm agent. Mr. Becker indicated that it was not necessary for Ms. Drobnick to recuse herself from this vote.

Motion to approve the two Concerts in the Park events with beer gardens on Sunday, August 21 and Sunday, September 11, 2022 from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Code Enforcement Department Staffing** – Approval was requested to authorize a Public Works employee to begin cross training with Code Enforcement Department and Zoning Officer staff on a trial basis.

Motion to approve the cross training of a Public Works employee to the Code Enforcement Department on a trial basis. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Street Closure Requests** – Consideration was requested to approve the following street closure requests:

- **Elm Street** – The 400 block of Elm Street has been requested to be closed on Sunday, August 14, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. for a community block party and backpack giveaway.

Motion to authorize the closure of the 400 block of Elm Street on Sunday, August 14, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. for a community block party and backpack giveaway. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Summit Street & 100 Block of North Third Avenue** – The 300 block of Summit Street and 100 block of North Third Avenue has been requested to be closed on Saturday, September 10, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> for a community block party. Placement of a bounce house and maintained fire lane have been reviewed by the Fire Chief and accepted by the applicant.

Motion to authorize the closure of the 300 block of Summit Street and the 100 block of North Third Avenue on Saturday, September 10, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. with a rain date of Sunday, September 11, 2022 for a community block party. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- h. **Business Privilege Tax Ordinance** – Authorization was requested to allow the Borough Solicitor to review the Business Privilege Tax Ordinance regulations. Berks Earned Income Tax Bureau (Berks EIT) has reviewed the Wyomissing Area School District, and Wyomissing and West Reading Borough Business Privilege Tax Ordinances and has made recommendations on improvements to each of these ordinance sections to allow their office to begin pursuing delinquent accounts. Mr. Murray indicated that Berks EIT is striving to keep our business. Mr. Becker stated that he reviewed the recommendations for West Reading and stated they are minor in nature.

Motion to authorize the Borough Solicitor to review the Business Privilege Tax regulations. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- i. **Cellular Phone Contract** – Consideration was requested to migrate cell phone service from Verizon to AT&T. Mr. Murray noted the improved services to emergency personnel through an AT&T contract, and a two-year contract with AT&T that would be equivalent to the current Verizon contract. Chief Holben expressed concern regarding the availability of AT&T repeaters within Reading Hospital. The Verizon repeaters are helpful in providing cell service throughout the hospital. It was decided to table the decision to change service providers at this time.
- j. **Trash Hauler Contract** – Consideration was requested to exercise the option to extend the terms of the Edgar Holland/Hollenbaugh's Trash and Recycling contract for one-year at the current year pricing. Mr. Becker noted the ability to extend the contract for two, one-year terms. Earlier this year Mr. Holland refused to extend the contract one-year while maintaining the current fixed cost of \$244,709 due to price increases. Subsequently a potential buyer has agreed to extend the contract one-year at the current fixed cost and agreed to transport materials to any

landfill facility within Berks County at no additional cost. Closing for the sale of this business is scheduled at the end of this month.

Motion to proceed with preparation of the documents necessary to extend and/or modify the trash hauler contract through December 31, 2023. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Kaag noted the following events this past month:

- **Bike Program** – On June 30<sup>th</sup> the bike program was promoted and the community was educated via WFMZ.
- **Berkshire Village Potluck** – A community potluck was held at the Berkshire Village complex on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Kaag was excited to see a number of proposed block party events that will provide an opportunity for the community to get to know their neighbors.
- **Grant Funding** – Grant funding opportunities are being pursued to assist in expanding service space within the Borough.
- **National Night Out** – The annual event will be held on August 2<sup>nd</sup>; and it was noted that volunteers are needed for the dunk tank.
- **Pride Celebration** – Mayor Kaag attended the Reading Pride Celebration Festival last weekend and noted a member of the Recreation Commission, Bethany Bower, who was awarded for her dedication and community service.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

11. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Holben referred to his report and offered to answer any questions.

Mr. Wert inquired as to the urgency to increase server capacity. Chief Holben indicated that this could wait until budget season.

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions regarding his report and noted that the granite handicapped ramps along Penn Avenue could be replaced with poured concrete and stamped to resemble granite. Mr. Wert indicated that salt is not recommended to be used on stamped concrete. Mr. Grassley reported that the handicapped ramp at the Pickleball Court has been installed and that the Pickleball Association will be paying for these supplies. Curbing repairs and replacements have been completed for the 2022 paving projects. Mr. Lineaweaver thanked Public Works for repairing the damaged fire hydrant near his home.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his report and offered to answer any questions. Consideration was requested to repurpose Rescue 64 to a water/sewer maintenance vehicle for the Public Works Department. Chief Moyer reported that an agent of Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus indicated that there would not be any issues or commission to transfer this vehicle in-house.

Mr. Wert asked if there was room at the garage for this vehicle. Mr. Grassley indicated that he would make room. He also noted that the generator on this vehicle might be helpful to the Police Department. Chief Moyer indicated that the light lens color would need to be changed from red to yellow and that the sticker decals could be removed fairly easily.

Motion to repurpose Rescue 64 to a water/sewer maintenance vehicle for the Public Works Department. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Code Department** – In Mrs. Hoffman's absence it was thought that Mr. Murray could answer any questions. Mr. Wert noted that the cover on this month's report indicates that there were no violations, fines or citations issued last month and wondered if that was an error. Mayor Kaag noted a loose dog interaction by the Property Maintenance Inspector and a resident inquiry as to permits being issued for the work being performed at 229 Sycamore Road. It does not appear from the report that there was any follow-up to that comment and Mayor Kaag confirmed that there is work being performed on the front porch of this address.

Mayor Kaag questioned the current regulations pertaining to political signage upon private property. Mr. Becker indicated that political speech is a highly protected form of speech, and that the ordinance section could be reviewed to potentially provide better clarification. Mayor Kaag also recommended review of the sign size computations for instances such as the large marquee sign that contains political messages from time-to-time. Mr. Becker noted that the time, place, manner and neutral content would need to be decided by Council and welcomed Council's feedback to draft an amendment. Messages or signs that do not pertain to an upcoming election would be considered freedom of speech.

Mayor Kaag stated that she is anxious to see the upcoming changes to the Code Department.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Ratcliffe offered to answer any questions about his report and noted the upcoming sidewalk sale planned on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup> and the current focus on the gateway project. It was noted that the Cheesecake business will finally be opening soon at 22 North Sixth Avenue.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

12. **COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce** – Mrs. Bressler noted that a meeting had not been held this past month. However, members are continuing to search for a sample non-discrimination ordinance that is the best fit for West Reading. Committee members plan to meet again during the first week of August.

Motion to accept the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Ratcliffe departed the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert noted discussions surrounding front yard setbacks and rope lighting amendments that should be coming before Council in the near future. The Rental Occupancy Ordinance is still being reviewed; feedback has been requested from the solicitor on a number of matters.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Recreation Commission** – Ms. Drobnick referred to the Recreation Commission minutes and noted an action item to add an event in the park that had not been included on the original schedule of events. A Battle of West Reading Karaoke Stars event has been recommended by the Commission to be held during Labor Day weekend on Saturday, September 3, 2022 with food and beer truck vendors. A small donation fee would be requested to compete and vote.

Motion to approve the Battle of West Reading Karaoke Stars event in the park on Saturday, September 3, 2022. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Lineaweaver thanked Helen Moyer, Dean Murray and Kerry Grassley for stepping up to cover the duties of the Recreation Director position.

Motion to approve the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Economic Development Committee** – The July Economic Development Committee meeting had been cancelled.
- e. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Kaag referred to the minutes and offered to answer any questions. A Free-Market event is being planned during the weekend following the Fall Festival and Community Yard Sale to allow residents to bring unwanted items to the Pavilion that other residents may find uses for to prevent these items from being thrown away. This may also be combined with a community potluck event on Saturday, September 24, 2022.

Motion to approve the Environmental Advisory Council report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – In Mr. Lincoln's absence Mr. Kaag noted the engineer's review of sanitary and storm sewer televised findings. Other topics of discussion were the ordinance section pertaining to prohibited parking at all times, and no winter maintenance. Revisions to the handicapped parking policy have been delayed to allow time for additional discussions.



Motion to accept the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Shade Tree Commission** – The July Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- h. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray offered to answer any questions regarding the report. There were no questions.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

13. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 6/30/2022** – There were no questions or comments.
- c. **Payment Approval Report 6/22/22 to 7/15/22 and 7/16/22 to 7/19/22** – There were no questions or comments.

Mr. Lineaweaver thanked Mr. Grassley and the Public Works Department for their efforts in monitoring the trash hauler to keep expenses down. Landfill disposal expenses are trending below budget at 37% mid-way through the fiscal year. These savings could lead to a reduction in refuse fees next year.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 6/30/2022, and Payment Approval Reports of 6/22/22 to 7/15/22 and 7/16/22 to 7/19/22. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers thanked Borough Council Members for their action with the City of Reading to deter noise disturbances in the Riverfront Drive area. He indicated that he visited the area last Sunday afternoon and found roughly one-hundred people peacefully picnicking with two police patrol cars present.

Mr. Rogers asked Mr. Murray which entity would be pursuing delinquent Business Privilege Tax collections. Mr. Murray noted that Berks EIT is working to improve their services and plans to begin pursuing collection of the Borough's delinquent accounts.

- 15. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary