

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

December 20, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, December 20, 2022 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Patrick Kaag, Denise Drobnick, and Zachary Shaver; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Fire Chief and Building Code Official Chad Moyer; Code Department Manager Cathy Hoffman (via Zoom); Police Chief Wayne Holben; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Member Jennifer Bressler was unable to attend.

VISITORS:

Karen Livingood, Resident

Chalain Mocerri, Resident

Johanny Cepeda Freytiz, PA House of Representative

Felix Freytiz, City of Reading Mayor's Chief of Staff

Ty Gardner, Resident (via Zoom)

Lance Parmer, Resident (via Zoom)

Charles Aden, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 today at 6:00 p.m. to discuss personnel matters, potential property acquisition, and pending litigation.

3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Johanny Cepeda Freytiz introduced herself as an elected representative of the state. Her attendance at this meeting was intended to meet members of Council, and to identify needs that she may aid the Borough in her new legislative role. She thanked members of Council for their service and shared news of her new office location at 1111 Penn Avenue, near the Wyomissing Post Office.

Felix Freytiz introduced himself as the Mayor's Chief of Staff for the City of Reading. Mr. Freytiz provided members of Council with his business card to assist in communicating ideas to address issues such as the recent noise complaints along the river.

Chalain Mocerri introduced herself and noted her recent opportunity to assist with the Trunk-or-Treat event. Ms. Mocerri submitted a letter of interest in serving the community through the Recreation Commission.

5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the November 15, 2022, regular meeting minutes, and the November 22, 2022, budget meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance 1158 Real Estate Tax Payment Amendment** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted that an amendment to Chapter 410 Taxation had been advertised and requested consideration to adopt the amendment.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 1158 Real Estate Tax Payment Amendment to add an article on the effect of failure to receive real estate tax notices. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Ordinance 1159 Prohibited Parking Amendments** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to amend Chapter 430 Vehicles and Traffic in relation to the street sweeping schedule on Spruce Street and bus stop location on Penn Avenue to meet existing conditions.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 1159 Prohibited Parking Amendments. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Ordinance – Handicapped Parking Space Amendment** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested authorization to advertise the additions and removals of handicapped parking spaces.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of an amendment to Chapter 430-26 Special Purpose Parking Zones. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Resolution 2022-20 Reaffirm Appointments to the Zoning Hearing Board** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to reaffirm the list of Zoning Hearing Board members noting their respective term end dates. It was noted that Ms. Shirk's term expiration was effective December 31, 2022, and that a letter of interest to be reappointed was submitted.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2022-20 Reaffirming Appointments to the Zoning Hearing Board for 2023. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Resolution 2022-21 PA Small Water and Sewer Program Grant** – Mr. Lineaweaver described this resolution that would identify the Borough Manager and Treasurer as the designated officials to execute documents and agreements between the Borough and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested grant.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2022-21 PA Small Water and Sewer Program Grant from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be applied towards the 500 block of Spruce Street Water Line Replacement project. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Resolution 2022-22 Authorization to Intervene in an Assessment Appeal** – Mr. Lineaweaver explained that currently the Masonic Center Foundation property located at 400 S. Seventh Avenue has essentially been zeroed out from the tax rolls. This resolution establishes the intention to appeal the tax-exempt status.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2022-22 Authorization to Intervene in an Assessment Appeal of tax exemption status of the property located at 400 S. Seventh Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **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** – Mr. Murray reported that Mr. Unger was unable to attend tonight's meeting and offered to forward any questions for Mr. Unger's attention. There were no questions or comments.

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:**

Mr. Lineaweaver indicated that he had nothing new to report at this time and wished everyone a happy holiday season.

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

- a. **2023 Meeting Dates** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to authorize the advertisement of 2023 meeting dates. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of 2023 meeting dates. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Committee Member Appointments** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to approve the list of committee member appointments and reappointments as follows:

Joint Municipal Authority (5-year term)

Member	Andrew Moletress	1/1/23 – 12/31/27
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Recreation Commission (2-year term)

Co-Chair	Vacancy	1/1/23 – 12/31/24
Member	Chalain Mocerri	1/1/23 – 12/31/24
Member	Jennifer Sabol	1/1/23 – 12/31/24
Member	Rafael Torres	1/1/23 – 12/31/24
Member	Bethany Bower	1/1/23 – 12/31/24

Environmental Advisory Council (3-year term)

Member	Paige West	1/1/23 – 12/31/25
Member	Jim Keller	1/1/23 – 12/31/25

Shade Tree Commission (4-year term)

Chair	Patrick Kaag	1/1/23 – 12/31/26
Member	Carol Leiendecker	1/1/23 – 12/31/26

Housing Review Board (3-year term)

Member	Janice Care	1/1/23 – 12/31/25
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Western Berks Water Authority (5-year term)

Member	James Beane	1/1/23 – 12/31/27
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Board of Appeals (3-year term)

Member	Cody Rhoads	1/1/23 – 12/31/25
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Pension Fund Committee (3-year term)

Member	Andrew Molettress	1/1/23 – 12/31/25
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Mr. Murray indicated that consideration should be given to include non-uniformed employees on the Pension Fund Committee.

Mr. Wert stressed the importance of empaneling appointments to the Finance Committee. There are currently three appointed members, two Council members and one resident. Per the enabling ordinance, a quorum of four is required.

Motion to approve the list of committee appointments and reappointments. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Animal Control Services Contract** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to allow him to execute a 2023 Limited-Service Contract with the Animal Rescue League. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that the price has increased from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per capita and reported that the contract would include services to enforce Code Red/Code Blue with the adoption of regulations.

Motion to authorize the Borough Manager to execute a 2023 Limited-Service Contract with the Animal Rescue League of Berks County. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Kaag referred to her report noting her attendance at a few events this past month. The most notable were gifts given to children through the North Pole Mailbox located in the Police Department Lobby, and the participation of Tower Direct in the Adopt a Family for the Holidays program. The recipient is a young man named Sully who is a member of our community. The West Reading Fire Department brought the ladder truck, and Tower Direct brought their ambulance to Sully's block with Santa and Mrs. Clause delivering gifts to the boys and girls. Mayor Kaag thanked the Recreation Commission for the smoothly run Tree Lighting Ceremony, noting several good comments that were received.

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

11. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Holben noted that the Berks County Community Youth Aid Panel annual recognition of outstanding service award was presented to the Wyomissing and West Reading Police Departments. The plaque will be displayed in Council Chambers until the fall of 2023.

Chief Holben requested consideration in the reallocation of unused 2022 Covid and Vehicle Replacement funds to purchase a secure cage at the range to assist in storage and to alleviate a portion of instructor overtime. The total cost of the cage with shipping is \$2,829.70.

Council members recommended budgeting this purchase within the confines of the proposed 2023 budget and tabled the action item.

Mr. Lineaweaver recounted an executive session discussion of two Officer requests for reimbursement to further their education in fields related to law enforcement.

Motion to approve the reimbursement of college courses for two Officers per the current Collective Bargaining Agreement. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley referred to his report and offered to answer any questions and noted that the ParkMobile signs were installed today in the paid parking lot.

A revised Alarm Tech Systems, Inc. proposal was provided to upgrade the video surveillance system with 8MP cameras. Mr. Grassley stated that the total cost for improvements would be \$12,411, and that \$23,000 had been budgeted.

Mr. Lincoln requested clarification on the playground camera to determine if this camera would be located near the firehouse. Mr. Grassley indicated that this area would be tied into the firehouse system at some point in the future.

Motion to accept the revised proposal from Alarm Tech Systems, Inc. to make upgrades to the video surveillance system in the pool and playground areas. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his report and offered to answer any questions. It was noted that delivery of the new Engine/Rescue 64 replacement has been delayed until the end of February.

Chief Moyer noted receipt of the ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) survey rating of 4. The score remained unchanged on the scale of 1-10. Chief Moyer indicated that a score of 5 is the national average, however, for a volunteer organization it is difficult to obtain a score above 4.

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

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer offered to answer any questions regarding his report and looks forward to hiring an internal Code Enforcement inspector soon.

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

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – In the absence of Mr. Ratcliffe Mr. Lineaweaver referred to the report noting the Small Business Saturday event held on November 26th, the carriage rides that sold out in one week, and window display contest. A T-Mobile Hometown grant has been applied for, and they are awaiting word from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) as to the lighting grant application. A community meeting is planned in January to discuss numbers for the Business Improvement District (BID).

Mr. Lincoln recommended an information blast be provided to the public once the ParkMobile paid parking program has been established. It was noted that to avoid confusion the Flowbird signs have been removed.

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

12. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce** – Ms. Drobnick provided an update noting a meeting with the solicitor to review a draft non-discrimination ordinance. There are a few aspects that are currently under review.

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

- b. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly referred to the Recreation report offering to answer any questions and thanked Mr. Kaag for his efforts in hosting a Disc Golf Tournament last month. A thank you was also provided to everyone that assisted with the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Winners of the home decorating contest will be recognized in person tomorrow.

Ms. Drobnick expressed gratitude towards everyone that has been contributing and teaming up with the Recreation Commission.

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

- c. **Planning Commission** – The December Planning Commission meeting was cancelled.
- d. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert provided highlights of discussions noting that Chef Alan's closed their doors last week, and a new business intends to occupy this space in the new year. Noodl should be opening soon. Winnie's Tea Bar will be expanding to offer desserts and bubble tea. Renovations are underway for the commercial space located at 101 S. Fifth Avenue. Giorgio's Pizzeria has been renamed Michaelangelo's of West Reading. Mr. Wert also noted that the owner of 428 Penn Avenue has volunteered to gather funds to repaint the railroad bridge that crosses Penn Avenue.

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

- e. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The November Environmental Advisory Council meeting was cancelled.
- f. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Lincoln noted discussions on reimplementing the enforcement of repairs to sidewalks damaged by Borough tree roots. The aspect of offering a financial incentive to property owners was thought by Committee members to be best determined by Borough Council. It was thought that a portion of the 2023 tree trimming budget could be used to kickstart an incentive type of program. Sidewalk repair guidelines were provided and requested by the Committee to be reaffirmed by Borough Council. Mr. Lincoln indicated that a decision would not be required this evening.

A revised proposal was provided by Haverford Systems, Inc. reducing the cost to upgrade the audio/video system in Council Chambers to \$9,450.98. The amount budgeted in 2022 was \$25,000. The Committee recommended approval of the proposal dated November 15, 2022.

Motion to approve the Haverford Systems, Inc. November 15, 2022 proposal to upgrade the audio/video system in Council Chambers in an amount not to exceed \$9,450.98. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- g. **Shade Tree Commission** – The December Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- h. **Safety Committee** – The December Safety Committee meeting was cancelled.

13. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 11/30/2022** – There were no questions or comments.
- b. **Payment Approval Report 11/16/22 to 12/15/22 and 12/16/22 to 12/20/22** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 11/30/2022, and Payment Approval Reports of 11/16/22 to 12/15/22 and 12/16/22 to 12/20/22. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Aden introduced himself as the local District Office Director and offered his email address as a form of contact until an office location is established. He offered to assist the Borough in pursuance of grant funding or to provide support/guidance of state services to the municipality and residents.

- 15. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary