

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

January 17, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Denise Drobnick, and Zachary Shaver (via Zoom); Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Fire Chief and Building Code Official Chad Moyer; Sergeant Ryan Phillips; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler (via Zoom); Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliffe; Engineer Tom Unger; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Administrative Clerk Stephanie Burkholder; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira (via Zoom).

VISITORS:

Karen Livingood, Resident (via Zoom)
Tina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner
Joseph Brennan, Resident

Ty Gardner, Resident (via Zoom)
John Harvey, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:08 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. It was noted that Borough Council will reconvene to executive session immediately following tonight's business meeting.

3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mrs. Livingood expressed concern and requested guidance to address the long-term street light outage on Linden Lane. Mr. Grassley conveyed his efforts to communicate with Met-Ed to address an underground power failure. Mr. Becker recommended the Borough and residents file complaints online to the Public Utility Commission noting the health and safety hazards that have been experienced in this area for a period exceeding one year. Mr. Lincoln recommended temporary solutions such as overhead wiring or solar lighting. Mrs. Livingood cautioned anyone visiting the area after dark to be aware of 2-3' wide holes in the planting strip area that are merely protected by orange safety fencing. Mr. Moyer will review current ordinance regulations pertaining to planting strip openings to determine if better safety measures could be enforced.

Motion to authorize the Borough Manager to write a letter to the Public Utility Commission expressing safety concerns surrounding the delay in correcting street light issues along Linden Lane. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the December 20, 2022, regular meeting minutes, and the December 27, 2022, budget meeting minutes. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance 1162 Handicapped Parking Space Designation** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted some additions and subtractions of designated handicapped parking spaces that have been advertised.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 1162 Handicapped Parking Space Designation Amendments. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Resolution 2023-1 Fee Schedule Amendment** – Mr. Murray noted proposed revisions to the Recreation non-resident playground program fees, non-resident pool day pass fees, and resident, non-resident and employee Bicentennial House and Pavilion rental fees, the addition of recycling bin fees for residences that exceed one free bin, and revisions to the Public Works and Police service fees. It was noted that a log of residences that have been provided with a free recycling bin is kept on file in the administrative office and the proposed fee offsets the cost of one bin.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-1 Fee Schedule Amendment. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

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. Unger did not have any action items this month and noted activities to prepare a Green Light-Go grant application and plans next month to begin the 2023 road paving projects. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Unger departed the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

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

Mr. Lineaweaver indicated that he had nothing new to report at this time.

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

- a. **Non-Uniform Health Insurance Agreement** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to authorize execution of the 2023 health insurance composite rate structure for the Pennsylvania Teamsters Health and Welfare Fund.

Motion to authorize the execution of an agreement between the Borough of West Reading and Teamsters Local Union No. 429 regarding health insurance in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Resignation of Parking Enforcement Officers** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to accept letters of resignation from Anthony Pollock and Antonio Reyes.

Motion to accept letters of resignation from Parking Enforcement Officer Anthony Pollock and Antonio Reyes. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Advertise Parking Enforcement Officer Position** – This action item was tabled.

- d. **Committee Member Appointments** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to approve the following committee member appointments and reappointments:

Joint Municipal Authority (5-year term)

Member	Fred Geiger	1/1/23 – 12/31/27
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Pension Fund Committee (3-year term)

Council Member	Jennifer Bressler	1/1/23 – 12/31/25
Member	Jamie Flickinger	1/1/23 – 12/31/25

Motion to approve the list of committee appointments and reappointments. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **Certification of Unpaid Tax Bills** – Mr. Murray requested authorization to execute the certification of unpaid 2022 regular and interim tax bills.

Motion to authorize the Borough Manager to execute the Certification of Unpaid 2022 Regular and Interim Tax Bills. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Ice & Spice Event** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to approve the Ice & Spice Event the weekend of January 26 – 29, 2023. It was noted that road closures were not requested this year.

Motion to approve the Ice & Spice Event on January 26-29, 2023. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Kaag referred to her report noting her attendance at a few events this past month. Mayor Kaag attended the soft opening of Noodl on Penn Avenue noting that the official opening date is today. The 2nd Friday on the Avenue event was attended where she met with the Art Gallery Board to discuss working together on future events. Attended Berks Benefitting Thon to share community support of a local resident who was recently diagnosed with a brain tumor. It was also noted that this week is restaurant week, and everyone was encouraged to check out the dine-in specials.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

11. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

- a. **Police Department** – Sergeant Phillips referred to Chief Holben’s report offering to answer any questions and noted an action item. Consideration was requested to approve an Officer’s request for reimbursement of college courses to obtain a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice.

Motion to approve an Officers request to continue their education in 2023 in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Lincoln requested an understanding of the reason there were over 750 fewer calls for service in 2022 as compared to 2021. Sergeant Phillips will review the information to provide feedback later.

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley referred to his report and offered to answer any questions and noted two action items.

A request was made to order a budgeted replacement of Truck #18, which is a one-ton pickup truck with a lift and utility body for water, sewer, and sanitation use.

Motion to approve the ordering of a replacement for Truck #18. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

A request was made to donate the Leaf Vacuum to Wyomissing Borough. As previously discussed, due to grant funding of the Leaf Vacuum, all sale proceeds would need to be returned to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). However, the equipment may be donated to another municipality at no cost to either municipality. The Borough of Wyomissing has accepted this offer.

Motion to donate the Leaf Vacuum to Wyomissing Borough. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his report and stated there were no action items. It was noted that a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters grant has been awarded in the amount of \$43,500 to fund the installation of an in-station air compressor and fill station to fill our self-contained breathing apparatus breathing air cylinders.

Chief Moyer reported that the West Reading Fire Department has established an Amazon Smile designation that would donate a percentage of the price of eligible purchases at no cost to the consumer.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer offered to answer any questions regarding his report. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Ratcliffe noted the upcoming events and pending grant application decisions. The ParkMobile paid parking program is up and running well.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

12. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce** – Mrs. Bressler stated that there was nothing new to report at this time.
- b. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly referred to the Recreation report offering to answer any questions and noted two action items this evening. Further information has been gathered from neighboring municipalities as to banner fundraising opportunities that Mr. Esterly plans to present to the Planning Commission next month. It was noted that fundraising letters have been mailed to local businesses requesting support for 2023 recreational events.

A list of 2023 recreational events was requested to be approved. It was noted that a winter karaoke competition is planned next month at 3rd & Spruce, a Fishing Rodeo in mid-April, and two Disc Golf Tournaments. The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission will be onsite at the Fishing Rodeo event to provide fishing rods to those in need. Adult related events to include alcohol vendors will be presented to Council for consideration in the future.

Motion to approve the 2023 Recreation Calendar of Events. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Drobnick expressed gratitude to everyone that has been contributing and teaming up with the Recreation Commission this past year and noted more interest in board membership than there are openings. Two letters of interest have been received, one from Troy Hassler who has been very involved with the board this past year. A second letter of interest was received from Mr. Harvey, who attended this meeting. Mr. Harvey was asked if there were any other committees that he may be interested in joining, and he indicated anything except Finance.

Ms. Shenk has witnessed a big improvement in the energy of the Recreation Commission and would like to see the businesses become more engaged. As Chair of the non-profit Love Team Ms. Shenk plans to donate \$500 to the Recreation Commission to use as they deem appropriate.

Motion to appoint Troy Hassler to the Recreation Commission with a term expiring on December 31, 2024. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Harvey was encouraged to attend Recreation Commission meetings to join discussions.

Motion to accept the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert recapped a lengthy and informative Code Red/Code Blue for Animals discussion with the Animal Rescue League's Humane Officer that attended the

meeting. It is recommended that the Borough adopts an ordinance similar to the City of Reading's regulations for ease of enforcement.

A representative from the solicitor's office was in attendance to discuss the multifaceted rental occupancy ordinance. After many years of reviewing these regulations, progress is being made towards a final draft.

The solicitor expressed concerns regarding the proposed banner sign fundraising program in a public forum that would prohibit regulating objectionable content. Further discussions are planned next month.

Political sign regulation review was tabled until next Tuesday's Council meeting when the solicitor is available to meet with the Planning Commission and Borough Council members to discuss viable amendments to the sign ordinance.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert provided highlights of discussions noting the opening and closing of certain businesses. There are available commercial spaces on the Avenue.

Motion to accept the Economic Development Committee report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The December Environmental Advisory Council meeting was cancelled.
- f. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – The January Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting was cancelled.
- g. **Shade Tree Commission** – The January Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- h. **Safety Committee** – The January Safety Committee meeting was cancelled.

13. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mrs. Rentschler reviewed the following end of year financial details:

- **PLGIT Investment** – Following a review of the end of year finances an additional \$140,000 will be invested in the PRIME account at a rate of 4.5%. No additional investments were recommended until after the April real estate tax collection period.
- **Financial Statement** – The end of year fund balance totals is healthier than what had been projected. The General Fund revenues earned \$300,000 more than what had been budgeted. Likewise, the General Fund expenditures were \$269,000 less than what had been budgeted. Combining these amounts together brought the 2022 budgeted deficit of \$200,000 to a surplus of \$380,000. Mr. Wert wished that the public would hear of the good steward's staff and Council are with tax dollars noting that services and projects are still being offered while saving money.
- **Capital Reserve Funds** – Mrs. Rentschler noted a remaining balance of \$33,000 in the Building Capital Expense Fund and \$99,000 remaining in the Highway Capital Expense Fund and requested direction as to moving the funds to the General Fund or expending the funds on additional projects or improvements this year. The Building Capital Expense

funds are planned to be allocated towards replacement windows at Borough Hall. The Highway Capital Expense funds could be allocated towards the paving of Sycamore Road. The Sycamore Road paving project could be bid as an alternate with the planned Seventh Avenue paving project to determine if both projects could be achieved this year.

Budget revisions will be addressed in the future once projects or improvements have been established.

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 12/31/2022** – There were no questions or comments.
- b. **Payment Approval Report 12/21/22 to 1/13/23 and 1/14/23 to 1/17/23** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 12/31/2022, and Payment Approval Reports of 12/21/22 to 1/13/23 and 1/14/23 to 1/17/23. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

15. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Motion to recess to an executive session at 8:25 p.m. to discuss pending litigation. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Borough Council reconvened at 9:08 p.m. No action was needed at this time.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary