

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

July 18, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, July 18, 2023 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Denise Drobnick, and Zachary Shaver; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Fire Chief and Building Code Department Manager Chad Moyer; Officer-in-Charge Chad Marks; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler (via Zoom); Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliffe; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Engineer Pamela Stevens; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Vice President Philip Wert was unable to attend.

VISITORS:

Ty Gardner, Resident	Tina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner
Karen Livingood, Resident	Lance Parmer, Fire Police
Charles Aden, Resident	Bethany Bower, Resident
James Accurso, Small Business Administration	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
Mr. Lineaweaver noted executive sessions that were held on Friday, July 7, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. to interview perspective Chief of Police candidates; and on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. to discuss Chief of Police candidate interviews; and on Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss employee performance and potential acquisition of real property.
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**
There were no amendments to the agenda.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
Mr. Accurso introduced himself as a representative of the Small Business Administration and noted a meeting with the Mayor last week to setup a Business Recovery Center at the Firehouse. The center will remain open through Friday, July 21, 2023 until 4:00 p.m. to assist anyone who experienced an economic setback tied to the R.M. Palmer Company factory explosion. Online applications may be submitted through March 24, 2024. The state is offering low interest loans to Berks County businesses as well as businesses located within all contiguous counties, such as Lancaster, Lebanon, Montgomery, Chester, Lehigh, and Schuylkill. There are no fees to apply for a loan, and no obligation to accept a loan up to \$2 Million. Loan repayments would be deferred for the first twelve months without accrued interest.
5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**
Motion to approve the June 20, 2023, regular meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**
6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**
 - a. **Ordinance – Wireless Communication Facilities in Rights-of-Way** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to establish standards relating to Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF) within street and sidewalk rights-of-way. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to authorize an advertisement to establish standards relating to wireless communication facilities in street and sidewalk rights-of-way. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Ordinance – Street Dedication** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to accept deeds of dedication of Elm Street and the northern portion of Cashmere Way. Mr. Becker reported that the remaining punch list item was taken care of by the developer earlier today.

Motion to authorize an advertisement to accept deeds of dedication of Elm Street and the northern portion of Cashmere Way within the Narrow Fabric Subdivision. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Ordinance 1167 Adoption of International Fire Code** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the intent to adopt the 2018 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC). There were no questions or comments.

Motion to adopt the 2018 International Fire Code. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Ordinance 1168 Adoption of Uniform Construction Code** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the intent to adopt the 2018 Uniform Construction Code. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to adopt the 2018 Uniform Construction Code. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Ordinance 1169 Parking Prohibited Certain Hours** – Mr. Lineaweaver reviewed the proposed amendments that included a modification to an existing school zone on Franklin Street and the addition of a school zone on South Seventh Avenue. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to adopt an amendment to extend the school zone on Franklin Street and add a school zone on South Seventh Avenue. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Ordinance 1170 Special Purpose Parking Zones** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted a proposed amendment that would add a temporary loading zone on Franklin Street, add a handicapped space designation on Tulpehocken Avenue, and relocate a handicapped space designation on Chestnut Street. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to adopt an amendment to add a temporary loading zone on Franklin Street, add a handicapped parking space on Tulpehocken Avenue and relocate a handicapped parking space on Chestnut Street. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Resolution 2023-14 Extension of Local Disaster Emergency** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration to extend the local disaster emergency until the next Borough Council meeting.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-14 extending the Proclamation of the Local Disaster Emergency until the August 15, 2023 Borough Council meeting. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- h. **Resolution 2023-15 Small Wireless Communications Facility Design Manual** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted this is in conjunction with the Wireless Communication Facilities in the Rights-of-Way. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2023-15 Small Wireless Communications Facility Design Manual.
Moved by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **CONSULTANT'S REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker indicated that he had nothing new to report that is not otherwise covered on the agenda.
- b. **Engineer's Report** – Ms. Stevens provided the following updates:
 - A Multimodal Transportation Grant Request has been successfully submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development (DCED) for the Ann Street sidewalk/curb and handicap ramp access project.
 - Bid documents are being prepared for grant-funded security camera upgrades.
 - The Spruce Street water line replacement grant notification is expected this fall.
 - There is no update on the Green Light-Go grant application.

Mr. Lineaweaver shared that the Pickleball Court traffic study and diagonal parking plan for Old Wyomissing Road have been shared with the City of Reading Parking Authority, we are awaiting comments. Also, Borough staff are pursuing the purchase of a bifold replacement garage door for the firehouse through a Costar vendor.

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

Ms. Stevens departed the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

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

Mr. Lineaweaver provided a recap of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) update that was released earlier today stating that the investigation is still ongoing, South Second Avenue will remain closed to allow the removal of manufacturing equipment from R.M. Palmer's building one, and the businesses are still working with their insurance companies to determine a path forward.

Mr. Lineaweaver would like to create an Ad Hoc 4th of July Committee to encourage community involvement in ideas for future events. An advertisement will be created and shared via social media and the Borough's website.

Motion to approve the creation of an Ad Hoc 4th of July Committee. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Council President's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

- a. **Emergency Declaration** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to ratify the authorization to execute an emergency declaration pertaining to the flooding event on Sunday, July 9, 2023 for the West Side Regional Emergency Management Association. Mr. Lineaweaver reported that he and Mr. Wert signed the emergency declaration to allow the Borough to be eligible for emergency funding should the need arise.

Motion to ratify the authorization to execute an emergency declaration pertaining to a flood event that occurred on Sunday, July 9, 2023 to West Side Regional Emergency Management Association. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Department of Environmental Protection Recycling Grant Legal Signatures** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to authorize the Council President and Borough Secretary to execute documents pertaining to the Recycling Grant. Mr. Grassley shared the total grant award amount of \$349,960.

Motion to authorize the Council President and Borough Secretary to execute documents pertaining to the Recycling Grant awarded to the Borough to purchase a front-end loader and 20-ton dump truck. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Form-Based Code Design Standards** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to authorize the Borough Solicitor to review Derck & Edson, LLC form-based code design standards.

Motion to authorize the Borough Solicitor to review the Derck & Edson, LLC form-based code design standards. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Lineaweaver shared information regarding a dedication planned for Mrs. Heckler on Saturday, August 5th at 9:00 a.m. at the old diving well area. Mrs. Heckler served on the Borough Council and the Recreation Commission for a number of years. A small ceremony is planned with her family, and members of the community are welcome to attend.

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

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Kaag referred to her report noting the following:

- July 3rd Berks County Field of Honor Event – The Mayor was honored to speak at the first annual event hosted by the West Reading-Wyomissing Rotary Club.
- July 6th Skate Park Groundbreaking Event – Though this event was held in the City of Reading, the skate park was spearheaded by the owner of the Holistic Skate Shop located here in West Reading. Also, on this date the Mayor and Council President met with State Representative Chrissy Houlahan to discuss first responder initiatives with the Fire Chief, Western Berks Ambulance and Dr. Barbera of Tower Health.
- July 10th – The Mayor met with Governor Shapiro at the R.M. Palmer site, and later met with Senator Judy Schwank, and State Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, and West Reading business owners at the West Reading Fire Company regarding the Small Business Administration resources.
- A reminder of the August 1st National Night Out event being hosted by the Police and Recreation Departments.
- The Mayor was honored to have been accepted into the Association of Mayors of Pennsylvania as one of eight to represent the state. This association will allow her to work with other mayors to learn from their proven leadership and bring information and ideas to the Borough.

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

11. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Sergeant Marks referred to his report and highlighted the 501 parking tickets that were issued by the new Parking Enforcement Officer this past month.

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. He noted an action item to purchase a front-end loader which was quoted last year to cost \$246,600, and the awarded grant that will fund 90% of this cost or \$221,000. An upgraded multi-purpose bucket costing \$26,750 will be covered 100% by grant funding. The John Deere dealer has an upgraded, slightly used front-end loader in stock that he negotiated a deal of \$224,000 with free delivery. Mr. Grassley requested permission to purchase the front-end loader with budgeted funds totaling \$245,000. The upgraded bucket will be delivered and paid for later this year. The dump truck will take roughly two to three years to receive.

Motion to authorize the purchase of a front-end loader through a Costar vendor with the awarded Recycling Grant funding. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and provided an update on the new Engine/Rescue 64 that he plans to have in service by the end of the month. Engine/Rescue 64 will be available to view during the upcoming National Night Out event. The old engine has been listed on the Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus website. Bids will be received until September 15th with bid opening planned for September 18th, which will be brought to Borough Council for consideration on September 19th.

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

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his written report and noted that Tower Health has submitted plans for two projects so far this year.

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

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Ratcliffe noted the upcoming French Fry Fest on August 12th and Fall Festival on September 16th. Mr. Ratcliffe shared an update on the four grant opportunities:

- Lighting Grant: They are currently working with the Borough on Penn Avenue lighting.
- Gateway Grant: The Berks Arts Council will be managing this design competition.
- Form-Based Codes Grant: As previously mentioned, the solicitor will be reviewing the Derck & Edson, LLC design standards.
- Façade Grant: He is in the process of submitting the required paperwork for façade grant reimbursement.

Mr. Lineaweaver was fascinated with the Placer.ai data that was shared. Mr. Ratcliffe is working with the County to possibly fund one program year totaling \$24,000. The data would be extremely useful.

Mr. Lineaweaver was sorry to hear that Mr. Ratcliffe will be leaving at the end of the year. He thanked him for his work with the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF) and obtaining grant funding. Mr. Ratcliffe reported that the WRCRF will be searching for a replacement that he plans to work with on hosting events and managing grants.

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

12. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Equity Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce** – Mrs. Bressler reported that a meeting was not held this past month.
- b. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly referred to his written report and shared upcoming events such as National Night Out, and the final Concert in the Park “Shines & Vibes” to include bands, food, and beverages. The Playground Program will begin winding down with the last day on August 4th.

Ms. Drobnick noted on Sunday, July 30th there will be a Steal the Glass event at Willow Creek Brewery that will benefit the Recreation Commission. Also, on Saturday, September 2nd will be a karaoke competition where Rick O’Shea will be defending his title. Costumes are optional but encouraged.

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

- c. **Planning Commission** – The July Planning Commission meeting was cancelled.
- d. **Economic Development Committee** – The July Economic Development Committee meeting was cancelled.
- e. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The June Economic Development Committee meeting was cancelled.
- f. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Lincoln noted a healthy agenda again this month and good discussions with resident visitors. An item of note was an audio upgrade to improve the sound of audience members and staff not seated at the table for those who are in attendance of meetings virtually. To be most cost effective, the committee is recommending a single wireless handheld microphone that can be passed around the room as needed or anchored to the podium at a cost of \$1,300.

Motion to approve the purchase of a single wireless handheld microphone to integrate with the existing audio/video system in Council Chambers. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

The yard waste collection discussion resulted in the committee’s desire to seek internal staffing drop off or pick up options prior to contracting a weekly collection of this material.

Motion to accept the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Shade Tree Commission** – The July Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- h. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray noted a training video related to heat stress that was viewed by the committee. There were no questions or comments.

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

13. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Transfer of Funds** – Mrs. Rentschler was comfortable in her recommendation to transfer \$300,000 in funds from M&T Bank to PLGIT Prime to earn additional interest. Mr. Lineaweaver noted M&T Bank's interest rate of 2.75% and PLGIT Prime's rate of 5.21% creating an opportunity to double the amount of interest earned.

Motion to authorize the transfer of \$300,000 from M&T Bank to a PLGIT Prime account. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Financial Statement Ending 6/30/2023** – There were no questions or comments.
- c. **Payment Approval Report 6/21/23 to 7/14/23 and 7/15/23 to 7/18/23** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 6/30/2023, and Payment Approval Reports of 6/21/23 to 7/14/23 and 7/15/23 to 7/18/23. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mrs. Livingood wished to publicly thank the Borough for erecting a clock at the pool.

- 15. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary