

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP/COUNCIL MEETING**

**September 9, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held a Budget Workshop and Council Meeting at Borough Hall on Saturday, September 9, 2023 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Jennifer Bressler, Patrick Kaag, Zachary Shaver, and Denise Drobnick; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; Public Works Member Michael Jacko; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Pro-Tem Christopher Lincoln was unable to attend.

**VISITORS:**

Maureen Hasty, Resident

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

**2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**

Mr. Lineaweaver shared a recent request from the Main Street Manager to host a Fete eu Blanc (White Party) on Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup> in the parkland and requested consideration to amend the agenda.

Motion to amend the agenda to include a discussion on the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation hosting an event in the park with alcohol. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

**4. BOROUGH MANAGER:**

- a. **Fete eu Blanc (White Party)** – Mr. Murray noted a change in venue for this previously proposed event to the Pavilion with the ability to Bring Your Own Bottle (BYOB). Borough Council was not in favor of a BYOB event in the park area. Licensed, insured, and certified bartender vendors were preferred. The established rental fee for resident versus non-resident events that range in size from a small birthday party to a larger event such as this was found to be justified to cover expenses. The typical non-profit event requests to waive fees were discussed in relation to the Borough also being a non-profit entity. It was recommended to charge the resident rate for non-profit requests.

Motion to approve a Fete eu Blanc West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation event on Saturday, October 7, 2023 at the Pavilion and Field without the ability to BYOB, licensed alcohol vendors would be required. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

**5. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT BUDGET:**

Mr. Grassley provided an overview of the 2024 budget noting the following:

### **Public Works Revenues**

- **01-362-500 Requests for Assistance** – Revenues associated with overtime for non-Borough sanctioned event requests, such as the French Fry Fest, and Reading Hospital Road Run were projected to end the year at \$5,140. The amount budgeted for 2024 was \$1,500.
- **01-391-430 Sale of Public Works Vehicles** – Mr. Grassley spoke of plans to purchase a replacement small dump truck to avoid downtime during snow events. The sale of Truck #52 could generate \$15,000, which was proposed as revenue for the year 2024. The sale of Truck #18 will be requested to be sold later this month with the anticipated revenue of \$7,500 in 2023.

### **Shared Building Expenses**

- **01-409-220 Materials & Supplies** – The 2023 budget is projected to be under budget due to leftover supplies purchased during the pandemic. The amount budgeted for 2024 remained at \$3,500.
- **01-409-230 Heating Fuel** – The projected year end estimate of \$20,000 exceeds what had been budgeted. The proposed 2024 budget was increased to \$16,000 in hopes of finding the cause for the unknown increase.
- **01-409-300 General Expense** – The projected year end estimate is below budget for flags and miscellaneous building expenses. The amount proposed for 2024 was lowered to \$300.
- **01-409-361 Electricity** – Due to increased rates the 2023 budget had been doubled; the projected year end estimate is slightly over budget. It was noted that the rate has been locked in for a period of three years with fees for early termination. The proposed 2024 budget was budgeted a bit higher at \$30,000.
- **01-409-366 Water** – The 2023 budget was projected to be below budget, the amount budgeted for 2024 was lowered slightly to \$1,900 for 2024.
- **01-409-373 Maintenance & Repairs Administration Building** – Mr. Grassley requested the Treasurer to separate expenses for the Administration, Police and Garage repairs to better understand these expenses. The amount budgeted for all three buildings in 2023 was \$35,000. The proposed 2024 breakdown of expenses was \$15,000 for the Administration Building, \$30,000 for the Police Department Building, and \$5,000 for the garage.

### **Public Works Expenses**

- **01-430-130 Salary – Public Works Director** – Mr. Grassley proposed an increase of \$10,000 in his salary for the 2024 budget and explained his theory for this request. He provided information on local municipalities with multiple department heads and their respective salaries as well as the cut in pay he took when he agreed to lead the department two years ago. Council members thanked him for his research and will take his request into consideration.
- **01-430-140 Crew Member Salaries** – Per the contract a 3.25% increase was proposed totaling \$540,000 in 2024.
- **01-430-172 Overtime** – The projected year end estimate of overtime is over budget in part due to the R.M. Palmer incident, which should be reimbursed by the insurance company, three water main breaks, and time associated with jetting sewer lines after hours. Snow did not impact this number this year. The proposed 2024 budget was increased to \$59,885. It was noted that a plowable storm could cost \$8,000 to \$10,000 of overtime per event.
- **01-430-173 Part-Time Help** – Mr. Grassley noted the extra projects taken on by the Public Works Department such as concrete work, jetting sewer lines, painting the pool, storm sewer

line improvements at the fire house, plans to improve the interior of the Bicentennial House, street tree trimming to accommodate the new higher profile fire truck, slate work at the pavilion, building an addition to the garage and four sewer line repairs all performed in house at a cost savings. Per the contract, Mr. Grassley proposed a permanent part-time position up to twenty-four hours per week that would work full-time during the summer months, in addition to one seasonal summer employee for a proposed 2024 budget of \$35,000. The hourly rate that was used was \$19 per hour for the permanent part-time/full-time position and \$17 per hour for the seasonal summer position. Mr. Grassley indicated that all these accomplishments have been made possible by a good group of Crew Members and he shared the positive feedback he received from search and rescue members during the R.M. Palmer incident. Council members appreciated the explanation and wondered if there would be any interest in filling this part-time/full-time position. Mr. Grassley reported that his son would be interested in filling this position.

- **01-430-181 Uniform Allowance** – Three-year replacement and maintenance of uniform items remained at \$2,000.
- **01-430-185 Boot Allowance** – The projected year end estimate of \$6,800 was corrected to reflect \$3,400. The proposed 2024 budget was \$3,600.
- **01-430-300 General Expense** – Mr. Grassley indicated that by providing better equipment the projected year end estimate of \$2,766 for equipment rental and miscellaneous supplies is below the budgeted \$18,000. The proposed 2024 budget was lowered to \$10,000.
- **01-430-336 Vehicle Replacement** – Mr. Grassley noted use of his personal vehicle for work after allowing the Recreation Director to use the Expedition and proposed the purchase of a 2024 Ford Bronco at a cost of \$32,000 to be split between four departments. The proposed 2024 budget was \$23,400 which includes the lease payment for the bucket van.
- **01-430-337 Vehicle Maintenance & Repair** – The most expensive maintenance and repair Truck #18 will be listed for sale soon. The service of a mechanic on staff provides cost savings on this line item. The proposed 2024 budget was \$30,000.
- **01-430-338 Gasoline** – The uncertainty of gas prices was proposed to remain at \$15,000 in 2024.
- **01-430-352 Vehicle Claim Repairs** – In lieu of using insurance to replace a mirror this year it was replaced in house. The proposed 2024 budget was \$1,000 which is the cost of a deductible.
- **01-430-375 Computer Equipment Maintenance & Repairs** – Mr. Grassley noted the \$6,000 purchase of a software program this year for the mechanic that has proven to save time and money. The proposed 2024 budget of \$13,000 included the purchase of a maintenance order software program for better scheduling and communication of work orders between the Public Works and Administration Department. It was noted that the meter reading devices have been replaced this year by much less expensive tablet devices.
- **01-430-416 Training Expense** – Pesticide license renewals and certification expenses proposed for the 2024 budget was \$2,000.
- **01-430-740 Major Equipment Purchases** – Two wish list items for next year were a brush hog to attach to the mini excavator to clear the bank along the river, and a stump grinder to attach to the skid loader. The purchase price of a stump grinder would be recouped in two years with an average life span of ten to fifteen years. The proposed 2024 budget was \$28,000. Mr. Wert inquired as to sharing with the insurance company the additional scope of work this department has been performing. It was noted that an audit is performed each year for activity.

### **Street Expenses**

- **01-431-374 Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs** – Mr. Grassley kept the \$5,000 expense moving forward for the aging street sweeper repairs.
- **01-431-455 Fees for Dumping Leaves** – Mr. Grassley noted that this line item will increase now that the trash hauler is not removing yard waste. He reported thirty-three vehicles that visited the garage last Saturday to drop off yard waste and five to six per weekday. The projected year-end estimate of \$5,000 exceeds the budgeted amount of \$1,930. The amount of \$5,000 was carried into the year 2024.
- **01-432-245 Snow & Ice Removal** – The proposed 2024 budget of \$40,000 is \$5,000 less due to moving funds to liquid fuels to purchase salt through that program.
- **01-433-246 Line Painting** – Mr. Grassley noted refreshing this year of all parking stalls and crosswalks. The 2024 budget remained at \$4,200. Mr. Wert recommended refreshing the yellow curbing.
- **01-433-375 Traffic Signal Maintenance & Repair** – The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$12,500.
- **01-438-370 General Maintenance & Repairs** – Additional blacktop patching is planned this year that is projected to end the year at \$10,000. The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$20,000.
- **01-446-300 MS4 Cooperation Agreement** – The annual agreement for 2024 stormwater management plans was proposed at \$24,000.

### **Shade Tree Expenses**

- **01-455-376 Tree Trimming** – The full budgeted amount will be utilized this year. The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$30,000. The purchase of a stump grinder could lower this expense.
- **01-455-378 Planting/Replacements** – Trees will be planted this year to catch up from last year expending the full budgeted amount of \$5,000. The proposed 2024 budget was \$3,000.
- **01-465-370 Penn Avenue Maintenance & Repairs** – Mr. Grassley noted repairs that are planned in the coming week prior to Fall Fest. The full budgeted amount of \$6,300 will be used. The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$6,300. Mr. Murray indicated that we will be working with the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation to paint the lower half of the streetlight poles following installation of the grant funded LED light fixtures. It was noted that installation of the new light heads is not funded by the grant and will be installed by the Public Works Department. Mr. Murray noted that the awarded grant funds are not sufficient to upgrade all Penn Avenue lights. A decision will be needed on upgrading every other light or just a few blocks.
- **01-492-336 Transfer to Special Reserve for Street Sweeper** – Mr. Grassley highly recommended continuing to reserve funds for a future purchase. The current sweeper is six years old. Mr. Grassley noted possible future grant opportunities to fund replacement of the street sweeper.

### **Capital Fund Expenses**

- **30-400-313 Engineering Capital Expense** – Mr. Grassley spoke of the paving projects that were recently completed to satisfaction. He noted that due to the minimal additional cost for thermoplastic pavement markings, future paving projects will require these markings which will reduce the frequency of refreshing. As a safety measure, improvements have been made to the Franklin Street meter pit to provide access from the street level as opposed to needing to access

the area underground. The projected year end estimate of \$32,000 is slightly above budget. The proposed 2024 budget was \$34,650.

- **30-409-000 Buildings Capital Expense** – Windows were replaced this year at the Borough Hall building; repairs were made to the police furnace and a new air conditioning unit was installed for the Administration office. There are multiple repairs planned to the Bicentennial House costing roughly \$5,000. In 2024, there are plans to replace additional windows at the Borough Hall building costing roughly \$30,000.
- **30-430-000 Highways Capital Expenditure** – The proposed 2024 paving projects were the 400 block of Grape Street, Fifth Avenue from Oak Terrace to Penn Avenue, the 200 and 400 blocks of Spruce Street, Park Alley and necessary curb repairs or replacements. A quote for Fifth Avenue was obtained from H&K Group, Inc. via a fairly new method that economically extends the life of useful asphalt surfaces via an asphalt reinforcement method. The process would mill the edges, inject geotextile asphalt, and apply a bituminous coating. This method can be used on roadways that do not require base repairs. The proposed 2024 budget was \$419,000.

#### **Liquid Fuel Expenses**

- **35-430-336 Vehicle Replacements** – The proposed 2024 budget was \$8,000 for the 2024 Ford Bronco. It was noted that a percentage of funds can be used towards the purchase of a vehicle.
- **35-432-000 Snow & Ice Removal** – The proposed 2024 budget was \$11,000 to purchase road salt.

The overall 2023-2024 budget report was noted to be under budget in 2023 due in part to \$130,000 savings in budgeted paving projects. The year end estimate is approximately \$50,000 below budget. The proposed 2024 budget was \$822,350.

The meeting was recessed at 10:31 a.m. for refreshments and reconvened at 10:42 a.m.

#### **6. RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET:**

Mr. Esterly provided an overview of the 2024 budget noting the following:

##### **Recreation Revenues**

- **90-367-105 Bicentennial Rental** – The proposed 2024 revenue was increased to \$12,000 with plans to offer discounted weekday rates to entice more rentals.
- **90-367-115 Field Rental** – Mr. Esterly proposed an increase to the 2024 budget totaling \$700 based on the Wyomissing Middle School's planned use of the baseball field and his intent to contact Berks Catholic School to offer available dates for use.
- **90-367-155 Pavilion Rental** – The proposed 2024 budget was lowered to \$3,000 based on the 2023 year end estimate falling below \$4,000. It was noted that the Zumba class is assessed a fee of \$80 for eight one-hour well attended weekly sessions. A per attendant fee was thought be a better assessment of fees, similar to Aqua Zumba.
- **90-367-200 Pool Receipts** – Mr. Esterly indicated that revenues were on par with the 2023 budget, however the cool weather during the month of June kept revenues down.
- **90-367-203 Spectator Fees** – The proposed 2024 budget was lowered to \$650 based on 2023 revenues.
- **90-367-204 Pool Special Events** – Oddly there were no pool party requests this year. The proposed 2024 budget was lowered to \$1,400.

- **90-367-206 Water Class Receipts** – Mr. Esterly noted that the Water Safety Instructor had other commitments this year, therefore swimming lessons were not offered. The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$2,500 with plans to have two lifeguards certified to provide swimming lessons.
- **90-367-207 Clothing Receipts** – Mr. Esterly indicated that prior uniform stock was used this year lowering the amount of revenue. The proposed 2024 budget was \$400.
- **90-367-300 Playground Registration Fees** – Mr. Esterly shared the half day program cost breakdown of \$5 per day per child for eight weeks and recommended considering raising these rates from \$200 to \$400 per child. Field trips were recommended to be raised from \$105 to \$155. Mr. Lineaweaver noted an improvement in the program this year based on his daughter's experience and the cost for other local summer programs that average \$200 per week. Ms. Drobnick noted an overstaffing of the half-day program based on the registration of thirty-two children. The recommended ratio is one attendant per ten children, there were seven leaders this year. It was thought that a better-quality program would cost more and that the taxpayers should not be burdened with supplementing the funding of this program. The program cost to taxpayers this year was roughly \$3,500. Mr. Esterly stated that it was comforting to retain a schoolteacher as the Playground Manager this year and noted a need to increase the pay scale to retain or attract teachers to fill this position. It was thought that reducing the number of leaders would free up funds to increase the Playground Manager's hourly rate.
- **90-367-350 Sign Banner Program** – Mr. Esterly shared that this program did not get off the ground due to legal challenges. An alternate business sponsorship temporary sign program was proposed. A recommendation was made to reverse the Platinum and Diamond designation to list Diamond as the top tier. An outline of this program will be shared with the Planning Commission and Borough Solicitor for further consideration.
- **90-367-400 Pool Concessions** – Mr. Esterly noted plans to increase pricing while maintaining a simple menu. The projected year end estimate exceeds what had been budgeted. A slight increase was proposed for 2024 totaling \$26,000.
- **90-367-801 Miscellaneous Pool Revenue** – Mr. Esterly stated that no replacement membership cards were needed this year. The proposed 2024 budget was increased to \$1,100.
- **90-367-805 Event Sponsors** – The projected year end estimate of \$11,746 exceeded the amount budgeted. Mr. Esterly indicated that future budgets will be separated by event.
- **90-367-806 Father Daughter Dance** – It was noted that due to a lack of interest this event had been cancelled. A final major push to advertise this event will be attempted next year. It was noted that this event generally sold out in the past with several Wyomissing School residents in attendance. Marketing through the schools will begin earlier and it is recommended to contact the City of Reading Recreation Department for ideas on aspects such as naming, timing, etc. The proposed 2024 budget was \$3,000.
- **90-367-808 Halloween Haunted Hayride** – Mr. Esterly stated that the Hayride will not be held on Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup> due to a scheduling conflict with the Wyomissing Homecoming Parade and Bonfire. The proposed 2024 budget was \$4,000.
- **90-367-810 Fishing Rodeo** – This is a new code to track revenue and expenses. The proposed 2024 budget was \$2,200.
- **90-367-811 Karaoke Contests** – This is a new code to track revenue and expenses with a proposed 2024 budget of \$3,100. It was noted that the handheld Clover device is instrumental in upselling during events.

- **90-367-812 Concerts in the Park** – Mr. Esterly indicated that there are discussions on reducing the number of concerts per summer from three to one due to the labor intensity and minimal attendance. The Vines & Vibes event was well attended this year and plans to be built upon for next year. There is also discussion on moving the event from the middle of the day to the end of the day.
- **90-367-815 4<sup>th</sup> of July Contributions** – Mr. Esterly reported that no event took place this year. Hopefully the new Ad Hoc Committee will bring ideas into action, a first of its kind drone show was preferred. The proposed 2024 budget was \$5,000.
- **90-380-100 Miscellaneous Recreation Revenue** – The proposed 2024 budget for items such as unclaimed disc golf sales were \$300.
- **90-387-301 Playground Field Trips** – The proposed 2024 budget was \$6,000 with an increase from \$105 to \$155 per child.
- **90-387-302 Playground Travel Donation** – Mr. Kuhn provided a donation of \$250 this year. The proposed 2024 budget was \$750.
- **90-387-303 Playground Fundraiser** – A sandwich sale is planned next year with a proposed budget of \$500.

#### **Transfer from General Fund**

- **90-392-001 Transfer from General Fund** – The amount contributed to balance the Recreation 2023 budget is \$143,000. The projected 2024 transfer is \$165,000. Ms. Drobnick indicated that the Recreation Commission is always looking for ways to improve revenues. The pool was thought to be the biggest drain, though Mr. Wert felt this was the cost of offering recreation type amenities to the residents. Mr. Grassley recommended adding a basketball court within the pool area to entice more membership and concession stand sales. Mr. Lineaweaver hopes to go paperless to avoid the need to fill out registration forms and bring these items to Borough Hall for processing. Mr. Grassley recommended converting the pool to a salt system for chemical cost savings.

#### **General Recreation Expense**

- **90-451-109 Father Daughter Dance** – Last year's theme will be used for cost savings. The projected 2023 year end estimate was \$360. The proposed 2024 budget was \$1,500.
- **90-451-110 Harvest Hayride** – The cost for prizes and food supplies was projected to end the year at \$500. The 2024 proposed budget was \$1,500.
- **90-451-113 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration** – The expense of a drone show next year was proposed at \$5,000. Resident feedback is needed.
- **90-451-121 Travel/Class** – Lifeguard certification year end estimate was \$2,895. The proposed 2024 budget was \$1,500.
- **90-451-187 Recreation Director** – A 3.25% increase was proposed to this salaried position totaling \$51,625 in 2024.
- **90-451-337 Vehicle Repairs & Maintenance** – A projected year end estimate was \$350 with a proposed 2024 expense of \$300.
- **90-451-431 Community Special Events** – The projected year end estimate of \$10,000 exceeded the \$3,000 that was budgeted. These expenses will be separated by event in the coming year.
- **90-451-432 Fishing Rodeo** – The proposed 2024 budget of \$1,800 was based on the ordering of less fish.
- **90-451-433 Karaoke Contests** – A \$200 expense was proposed for prizes in 2024.

- **90-451-434 Concerts in the Park** – An \$1,800 expense was proposed for band(s) and tee shirts in 2024. This expense may be less if the number of events is reduced to one.
- **90-451-501 Clover Credit Card** – A \$5,000 pass through processing fee and \$49 monthly fee per device was proposed in 2024.

#### **Pool Expenses**

- **90-452-021 Pool Supplies** – Mr. Esterly noted the need to replace the photo printer, ink, and paper this year for pool identification cards. A new pool identification card system was proposed in 2024 to cost \$3,500. The new system would avoid the need to print identification cards by scanning a barcode that would provide data metrics of each patron. The reports could also pinpoint staffing patterns to avoid overstaffing.
- **90-452-022 Maintenance/Repairs** – The cost of a suppression hood inspection was proposed in 2024 totaling \$400.
- **90-452-023 Equipment** – The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$1,500 to replace buoys for lifeguards.
- **90-452-181 Pool Wages** – The year end estimate of \$70,000 was under the budgeted amount of \$81,000. The proposed 2024 budget was \$82,000.
- **90-452-182 Concession Wages** - The year end estimate of \$17,000 was under the budgeted amount of \$19,000. The concession stand ran a deficit of \$3,021. A review of wages and an adjustment of staffing was recommended.
- **90-452-185 Uniforms** – The proposed 2024 budget was lowered to \$1,200 with plans to reuse shirts.
- **90-452-321 Concession Supplies** – The year end estimate was below the budgeted \$15,500. The proposed 2024 budget was \$14,000.
- **90-452-370 Repair & Maintenance of Buildings & Supplies** – Replacement of the motor to the baby pool caused an increased expense this year of \$17,000. The proposed 2024 budget was \$17,000.
- **90-452-374 Repairs & Maintenance Equipment** – Mr. Esterly noted the need for larger sinks in the concession stand per the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's inspection. The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$20,000.
- **90-452-531 Pool Chemicals** – The projected year end estimate of \$21,700 exceeded the budget of \$16,500. The proposed 2024 budget was \$20,000.

#### **Playground Expense**

- **90-453-038 Field Trip Expense** – The projected year end estimate of \$1,050 was below the budgeted amount of \$4,000. The proposed 2024 budget was \$4,500.
- **90-453-131 Travel Expense** – The projected year end estimate of \$700 was below the budgeted amount of \$1,500. The proposed 2024 budget was \$2,000.
- **90-453-180 Uniforms** – Uniforms were collected and washed to save on purchasing new ones each year. The proposed 2024 budget was \$150.
- **90-453-181 Playground Program T-Shirts** – To help identify program children on field trips additional sizes will need to be purchased. The proposed 2024 budget was \$300.
- **90-453-83 Playground Wages** – Due to less staff and no Assistant Manager, the projected year end budget of \$12,217 was under the budgeted amount of \$24,000. The proposed 2024 budget was \$16,000.



7. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:42 a.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary