

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

September 26, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held a budget workshop and conditional use hearing at Borough Hall on Tuesday, September 26, 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; Mayor Samantha Kaag (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Zoning Officer Chad Moyer; Borough Manager Dean Murray; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Borough Engineer Pamela Stevens (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Chief of Police Richard Tornielli (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Public Works Director Kerry Grassley (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident

Stephen Price, Attorney

Melvin Acevedo, Resident

Kevin Neff, Visitor

Debra Selsavage, Stenographer

Karen Livingood, Resident (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Lineaweaver reported that an executive session was held this evening at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the potential acquisition of real property and the pending litigation of the conditional use hearing scheduled this evening.

3. AGENDA AMENDMENTS:

There were no amendments to the agenda.

4. CONDITIONAL USE HEARING:

A motion was made to recess the business meeting at 6:33 p.m. to open the public hearing for the conditional use application. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Becker introduced himself as the Solicitor for Borough Council and the purpose of the hearing this evening was to hear the conditional use application of Mel's Auto Service, LLC. Melvin Acevedo was present and represented by his attorney, Mr. Price. Mr. Becker shared the procedure of Mr. Acevedo's responsibility to present the burden of proof to establish the relief requested with Mr. Price's assistance in providing evidence. Following this testimony, Borough Council and the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions. After all the evidence has been presented the Borough Council will enter an executive session to deliberate on the requested action and may provide an oral decision this evening. If an oral decision has not been provided this evening a written decision will be required within forty-five days.

Mr. Becker provided an overview of the following procedural exhibits:

1. Conditional Use Application
2. Application for Zoning Permit
3. Site Survey prepared by John Hoffert
4. Zoning Officer denial letter dated June 21, 2023

5. Public Hearing Notice
6. Proof of Publication of Public Hearing Notice, advertised in the Reading Eagle on September 12, 2023, and September 19, 2023
7. Affidavit of Posting at Borough Hall – Public Hearing Notice
8. Affidavit of Posting at 101 Franklin Street - Public Hearing Notice
9. Affidavit of Mailing – Adjacent Property Owners
10. Memorandum to Adjacent Property Owners and Business Owners
11. Letter from Dean Murray, Borough Manager advising Planning Commission recommends approval of Conditional Use Application
12. Office/Garage Lease
13. Systems Design Engineering, Inc. review letter dated August 30, 2023

There were no objections to the exhibits which were moved into the record. Mr. Price noted two witnesses that were sworn in by the Stenographer, Mr. Neff, and Mr. Acevedo.

Mr. Price entered his appearance as an attorney of Mogel Speidel Bobb & Kershner on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Price entered that Mr. Acevedo currently resides at this property as a tenant with his family on the second floor. The first-floor garage and office space of the property became available and Mr. Acevedo desires to establish an automotive repair and inspection station at this location. It was noted that there are no planned structural changes. Mr. Neff is the property manager who is present this evening to represent the property owner, John Pakradooni's interests, and to testify as to the prior use of the first-floor space and available off-street parking. Mr. Neff described the structure at 101 Franklin Street noting a garage, office, and bathroom space on the first floor and two residential apartment units. The prior use of the garage space was by an HVAC business. Mr. Price referred to a lease agreement that includes three off-street parking spaces within ten yards of the property known as 101 Franklin Street. The neighborhood was described as a secluded area adjacent to the highway with mixed uses such as residential, commercial, and industrial. Mr. Neff was asked if in his opinion that an automotive repair facility by appointment only would cause any traffic congestion or health, safety or welfare issues to the neighborhood, Mr. Neff did not believe so. A mechanical repair business was also thought not to present any issues with heat, smoke, or glare in that vicinity. No one has approached Mr. Neff or Mr. Pakradooni after posting of the property to express concerns about the proposed use. According to the lease agreement there will be no structural changes to the building and the proposed use should be a quiet automotive repair business.

Mr. Becker provided the Borough Council and audience with an opportunity to ask questions of Mr. Neff. Mr. Wert inquired as to how often Mr. Neff visits this property. Mr. Neff noted a minimum of twelve visits per year to collect rent, and his B & F Management, LLC partnership style as a more proactive rather than reactive approach to keeping a good relationship with the owner and tenants. There are roughly fifteen rental properties that are managed by Mr. Neff's partnership that are in good standing with the Borough's Code Department. Mr. Becker inquired as to potential signage for this property. Mr. Neff indicated that the owner of the property would not approve of a large neon style sign.

Mr. Acevedo acknowledged that he is the principal of Mel's Auto Service, LLC, that performs light mechanical and automotive maintenance services. There are no plans to perform body work or

engine or transmission replacements at this location. The focus will primarily be on inspections and emissions. There are no plans to hire staff, the operations will be handled by himself and his wife. A business sign would comply with code regulations. Business hours were noted as Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. He understands that the business would have to comply with any conditions imposed by Borough Council and all Borough Code regulations including off-street parking requirements or be subject to citations. Hazardous material storage and disposal for items such as motor oil or antifreeze, etc. would be stored inside the garage area and contracted for proper disposal locally. Mr. Acevedo shared that he has been a mechanic for a number of years, noting his father's business in the City of Reading on Washington Street. Mr. Acevedo felt the space would be sufficient for his intended use and would not cause a detriment to the neighborhood. The proposed use of this space is in character with the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Becker provided the Borough Council and audience with an opportunity to ask questions of Mr. Acevedo. Mr. Becker inquired as to plans to install a sign. Mr. Acevedo indicated that any sign would be small in nature with minimal lighting and in compliance with the sign ordinance.

Mr. Rogers provided his statement indicating that the use would be a benefit to the community and the number of available on-street parking spaces in the area.

Mr. Moyer confirmed that Mr. Neff's property management style is in good standing with the Code Department, and they are very responsive.

Borough Council entered an executive session at 6:55 p.m. to deliberate a decision.

Borough Council reconvened the conditional use hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Motion to approve the conditional use application to Mel's Auto Service, LLC for the property located at 101 Franklin Street, West Reading subject to the following conditions:

1. Vehicles being serviced may not utilize on-street parking. As a resident, Mr. Acevedo may park his personal vehicle(s) on the street. However, should Mr. Acevedo move his residence from this location or hire an employee the availability of additional off-street parking spaces would be required to comply with the ordinance.
2. The hours of operation were specified as Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
3. Hazardous material storage and disposal must be handled properly according to applicable laws.
4. Body shop type work is prohibited on the property.
5. No hazardous materials may be stored on the exterior of the property.
6. All vehicles must be licensed and currently inspected and may not remain on the property for more than ninety days.
7. All work must be performed inside the garage, not on the exterior of the property.
8. Mr. Acevedo is bound by all testimony provided today and must comply with all laws and regulations and obtain necessary permits and commence the relief that is being awarded tonight within one year from the written decision that will be provided within the next forty-five days.

Mr. Acevedo requested clarification on the prohibition of working outside to include the driveway. Mr. Becker confirmed that work may not be performed on the driveway.

Moved by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Acevedo, Mr. Price, and Mr. Neff departed the hearing at 7:13 p.m.

Motion to reconvene the Borough Council meeting at 7:18 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 7-0.**

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers spoke of Berkheimer Tax Innovations' standard operating procedure to provide delinquent notices forty-five days after the initial notice and the small percentage of initial responses that were received this year. Following another forty-five-day period the accounts are shared with their internal collection agency and then proceed from there into the court system. Mr. Rogers recommended that Borough Council appoint a person or department to oversee the Business Privilege Tax (BPT) program. Mr. Lineaweaver referred to a discussion with him and Ms. Thompson following a Council meeting that reviewed the in-house processes and the gratefulness that follow-up notices are being provided by the current BPT collector.

Mr. Rogers shared an incident he witnessed at the Fifth and Penn Avenue intersection where two scooters navigated an illegal left turn and turned around via use of the sidewalk. Also, he witnessed six to eight bicyclists using the sidewalk in the vicinity of the American Diner and expressed a concern of pedestrian safety on this frequently occurring violation. Chief Tornielli noted the varied legalities of the types of vehicle/scooter/dirt bike registrations that are required and are being watched while in operation.

6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Resolution 2023-21 Emergency Operations Plan** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the Westside Regional Emergency Management Agency (WREMA) request to adopt a revised plan. Mr. Lincoln inquired as to documented revisions to the plan being reviewed by the various departments. Mr. Murray noted a minor update that is performed every three years. Adoption of the resolution was tabled until October 7, 2023, to allow staff time to review the revisions.

7. **BOROUGH MANAGER:**

- a. **Code Department Vehicle** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to purchase a replacement vehicle with costs divided between the Fire and Code Departments. If approval is granted to purchase a replacement vehicle this year Mr. Moyer plans to delay the purchase of a lighting package until 2024. Mr. Lincoln inquired as to the ability to make this purchase in the current budget. Mr. Moyer indicated that Mr. Grassley negotiated a deal to purchase a 2023 Bronco Sport with 500 miles at a cost of \$31,289 through a Costars vendor. Mrs. Rentschler recommended a lump sum purchase as opposed to financing.

Motion to authorize the purchase of a replacement Code Department vehicle with costs divided between the Fire and Code Department budgets totaling \$31,289. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley Appointment** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to appoint Dan Horman to this board noting his prior experience on a similar board.

Motion to appoint Dan Horman to the Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley for a term ending December 31, 2027. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Reading Hospital Road Run Event** – Mr. Murray noted confusion last week about the approval of this event while Ms. Kohl was requesting the barricade fees to be waived.

Motion to approve the rain or shine Reading Hospital Road Run event on Sunday, October 15, 2023. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Pension Advisory Committee Appointment** – Mr. Murray requested a second Council member to be appointed to the Committee. Mr. Lineaweaver volunteered to join Mrs. Bressler on this committee.

Motion to appoint Ryan Lineaweaver to the Pension Advisory Committee. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **Pension Advisory Committee Resignation** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to accept letters of resignation from the Pension Advisory Committee from Ryan Phillips, Keith Phillips, and Andrew Moletress.

Motion to accept letters of resignation from the Pension Advisory Committee as noted. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Summit Street Block Party** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to approve a revised date due to weather.

Motion to approve the Summit Street Block Party event on Saturday, October 14, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- g. **Municipal Solid Waste Collection** – Mr. Murray requested consideration to authorize the readvertisement to solicit bids for waste collection. Mrs. Rentschler provided a breakdown of tipping fee cost differences between a Borough contract and hauler contract, noting that it would be less expensive for the Borough to contract with a landfill. She also noted a discrepancy that was found in the number of units that should be lowered from 1,900 to 1,710.

Ms. Stevens noted the inclusion of a right to cure by the solicitor and the term options of a three-year with two one-year optional extensions, and a one-year with two one-year optional extensions. Options 1 through 4 are the twice per week trash collection and once per week recyclable collection; options 5 through 8 are once per week trash collection and once per week recyclable collection.

Mr. Grassley shared recommendations that were made by Ms. Meeks from the County Solid Waste Authority with regards to bulk trash collection. To avoid the bidder from estimating that each unit would be placing a ticketed bulk item out for collection on every collection day it was

recommended to separate this expense to a flat per item price. Ms. Stevens recommended the bulk items to be included as an alternate by weight. It was noted that varied levels of costs could be passed onto the resident for small, medium, or large items. The hauler would then be paid by the number of tickets sold by size.

Mr. Grassley departed the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Mr. Moyer expressed his full support of a ticketed bulk item collection program.

Ms. Stevens requested Council's feedback to be able to advertise the request for bids this Friday. Mr. Lincoln noted concerns surrounding constituent satisfaction and savings realized on reducing to a once per week trash collection program and recommended removing options 3 and 4, and 7 and 8. Mr. Wert shared his personal preference to twice per week trash collection for flexibility and convenience. It was noted that a small number of residents have shared their preference of once per week trash collection. Ms. Drobnick questioned when as community leaders do we encourage people to generate less trash.

Borough Council agreed to move forward with only twice-per-week collection options and three alternate bulk item unit prices. Mr. Lineaweaver recommended the implementation of a policy that would not provide refunds for bulk item removals by someone other than the trash hauler.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of a request for bids of varied contract terms for twice per week trash collection, once per week recyclable collection, and three alternate bulk item prices, small, medium, and large. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Drobnick.

Motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Stevens, Mr. Moyer, and Mr. Becker departed the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

8. **POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET:**

Chief Tornielli provided an overview of the 2024 budget noting the following:

Police Department Revenues

- **01-331-110 Vehicle Code Violations / DJ** – Adjustments were made to the first six revenue line items based on recent trends. The 2023 estimated year end revenue vehicle code violations was roughly \$20,000 less than what had been budgeted. Therefore, the proposed 2024 budget was \$55,000. Mr. Lincoln inquired as to the reason for the difference in revenue this year. Chief Tornielli will review the disposition of the number of cases.
- **01-331-111 Vehicle Code Violations / State** – The trend of \$1,500 was carried through to next year's budget.
- **01-331-120 Violations Ordinances & Statutes** – The average trend of \$8,000 was proposed for the 2024 budget.
- **01-331-300 Parking Tickets** – The drop in revenue for parking tickets was noted to be in part to the number of parking enforcement staff. The proposed 2024 budget was \$90,000.
- **01-331-310 Permit Parking Violations** – The 2024 proposed budget was lowered slightly to meet the estimated year end budget of \$2,000.
- **01-331-320 Parking Meter Violations** – Chief Tornielli noted the continual drop in parking meter violation revenues over the last three years from \$20,000 in 2021 to \$5,000 in 2023. He believes this is a product of the parking meter apps allowing the user to refill their time from

wherever they are. The proposed 2024 budget was \$5,000. Mr. Lineaweaver noted a tumultuous time this year staffing parking enforcement officers and their main concern of on-street parking violations.

- **01-354-021 Police Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) Grant** – Mrs. Rentschler shared Sergeant Holben’s two-year technology grant implementation schedule with the remaining revenue of \$51,188 anticipated in 2024.
- **01-354-035 Local Share Account (LSA) Grant #85110 Cameras** – Chief Tornielli noted plans to perform camera upgrades next year. Therefore, the \$264,750 revenue was moved from 2023 to 2024.
- **01-361-100 Public Safety Police Services** – Chief Tornielli noted a fluctuation in revenues the past few years and proposed \$5,000 in revenues in 2024.
- **01-361-110 Police Report Photocopies** – Chief Tornielli noted the anticipated revenue stream of \$4,000 in 2024.
- **01-361-113 Aggressive Driver Enforcement** – The proposed amount of \$5,000 was carried into the year 2024.
- **01-361-114 Drug Task Force** – To be conservative, revenue associated with county involvement on investigations remained at \$500 in 2024. The projected year end estimate for 2023 was \$1,000.
- **01-361-183 National Night Out Proceeds** – Mrs. Rentschler noted that Officer Good was on leave this year and therefore no donations were received. The proposed 2024 revenue to offset expenses was \$1,000.
- **01-361-184 Crime Prevention Proceeds** – The proposed 2024 revenue for the sale of hats and t-shirts was more conservative at \$500.
- **01-387-410 Donations K-9 Program** – The standard grant funding received from the Berks County Community Foundation for the 2024 program was \$7,500.
- **01-391-410 Sale of Police Vehicles** – The sale of the 2011 Ford Explorer K-9 vehicle was proposed in 2024 to generate \$5,000.

Police Department Expenses

- **01-410-121 Salary of Chief** – The salaries associated with the Chief, Sergeants and Patrolmen were budgeted to increase 3% in 2024.
- **01-410-131 New Patrolmen Salary** – Chief Tornielli recommended hiring two new patrolmen next year to balance staffing levels and even out patrol squads while reducing overtime costs. These expenses were included in one line item for the ease of removal. He noted the impact on the department when a patrolman is out on an injury, illness, or vacation and the effect on their quality of life. The total proposed 2024 budget of \$320,000 included wages, benefits, and uniforms. He expressed the importance of reinstating the community impact car to maintain a presence within the community. Mr. Lineaweaver requested an idea of the reduction in overtime with the proposed new hires. Chief Tornielli estimated a full year savings of \$15,000. Mayor Kaag recommended preparing for the potential retirement of Officer Hawn through the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP).
- **01-410-133 Desk Clerks** – A 3.25% salary increase was proposed for the 2024 budget totaling \$95,727.
- **01-410-134 Parking Enforcement Wages** – A 3.25% salary increase for two full-time parking enforcement officers was proposed in 2024 totaling \$77,232.

- **01-410-135 Shift Differential / Field Training Officer (FTO)** – Chief Tornielli proposed a total of \$16,500 for the 2024 budget. Should Council choose not to hire two patrolmen this could be lowered to \$11,000.
- **01-410-136 On-Call Pay** – The number of days in the year are factored into the proposed 2024 budget of \$5,840.
- **01-410-138 Officer in Charge** – Chief Tornielli noted the contractual hourly increase in pay when either a Sergeant or Chief is away and the proposed 2024 budget of \$7,000.
- **01-410-171 Overtime** – A history of annual overtime expenditures were noted with a reduction budgeted in 2024 of \$7,000 to \$180,000 based on the potential two new hires.
- **01-410-172 Holiday Pay** – The contractual addition to pay when working a holiday was budgeted in 2024 at \$123,600.
- **01-410-174 Overtime for Special Events** – This amount varies greatly; it was decided to add a 3.25% salary increase to bring the proposed 2024 budget to \$25,355.
- **01-410-175 Overtime for Court Cases** – This is difficult to predict, the budgeted amount of \$33,000 for 2023 was carried over to 2024.
- **01-410-181 Uniforms** – The budgeted amount of \$16,000 was carried through to the 2024 budget.
- **01-410-182 Uniform Cleaning** – Chief Tornielli noted the limited use of drycleaning services and lowered the amount budgeted for 2024 to \$1,000.
- **01-410-190 Civil Service Testing / Fees** – These fees would be dependent on Council's decision on hiring new officers. The proposed 2024 budget was \$2,500.
- **01-410-193 Hiring Cost for Police Chief** – There were no expenses allocated for hiring a police chief in the 2024 budget.
- **01-410-194 Hiring Cost Full-Time Officers** – The cost to advertise and perform background checks in 2024 was budgeted at \$6,500. There was an internal discussion of hiring officers with or without Act 120 certification(s), noting that hiring without the certification would be a cost to the Borough for training. It was noted that the state would refund a portion of the officer's salary while attending the academy. Chief Tornielli noted three individuals that he spoke with during Fall Fest that graduated from the academy. Recruiting efforts were recommended through the National Guard or City Colleges.
- **01-410-210 Materials & Supplies** – There have been fluctuations in these expenses in the past few years. Based on a review of needs the proposed budget for 2024 was \$11,000.
- **01-410-225 Investigative Expenses** – Witness expenses and investigative purchases were low this year. The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$2,000.
- **01-410-232 Memberships** – An adjustment was made to include the annual Berks County Emergency Response Team (BCERT) membership of \$6,000 from the line item for Ammo and Weapon Supplies. The proposed 2024 budget was \$8,800.
- **01-410-242 Ammo & Weapon Supplies** – The BCERT annual membership fee of \$6,000 was removed from this line item. Chief Tornielli noted delayed plans to purchase a storage cabinet for supplies at the firearms range in 2024 costing \$3,000, and the costly replacement of PepperBall rounds. The proposed 2024 budget was \$6,400.

- **01-410-252 Technology Fees** – Chief Tornielli noted a significant increase in this line item for software costs and the added \$14,000 cost of body camera video storage to cloud storage. The proposed 2024 budget was \$110,000.
- **01-410-300 General Expense** – Chief Tornielli noted a lull in spending this past year, however, based on previous years the proposed 2024 budget was \$3,500.
- **01-410-305 Canine Program** – Chief Tornielli noted rolling all the fees for this program into this line item. The proposed 2024 budget was \$2,500.
- **01-410-306 Canine Grant Expense** – The match to revenue from the Berks County Community Foundation grant remained at \$7,500 in 2024. Mayor Kaag requested the K-9 report to be added to the report to Borough Council each month.
- **01-410-314 Legal Services** – The proposed 2024 budget remained at \$12,000.
- **01-410-319 Telephone Expense** – The landline and cell phone expenses in 2024 were lowered to \$11,000 to match the projected year end estimate.
- **01-410-320 Communication Expense** – The county dispatching service fee increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for 2024 totaled \$43,000.
- **01-410-327 Computer Maintenance** – A significant increase is planned in 2024 for the new reporting system called Cody Pathfinder, three replacement laptops, and annual service fees totaling \$11,200.
- **01-410-336 Vehicle Replacements** – Chief Tornielli noted the Kovatch Sales & Service dealer is closing out all 2023 orders and plans to skip the 2024 model year by jumping to the 2025 model year. The planned 2024 replacement of the last sedan #38-9 with a 2023 Ford Explorer with all equipment installed was quoted at \$55,815; the 2025 Ford Explorer was quoted at a \$5,000 to \$6,000 increase for the same vehicle. He requested direction from Borough Council on how to proceed, including the option to lease or purchase. The proposed 2024 budget of \$105,170 includes lease payments for four vehicles and the purchase of a 2023 Ford Explorer. Chief Tornielli preferred to deal with Kovatch Sales & Service as a one stop shop that would handle coordination of the entire package delivery, including addressing any equipment or lighting issues.
- **01-410-337 Vehicle Maintenance & Repair** – Historical review brought an average of \$18,000 for the proposed 2024 budget.
- **01-410-338 Gasoline** – An increase was budgeted in 2024 totaling \$30,000.
- **01-410-339 Tires** – The proposed 2024 budget was lowered to \$1,000 based on past spending practices.
- **01-410-351 Police Auto Insurance** – An 8% increase was estimated in 2024 totaling \$14,472.
- **01-410-352 Vehicle Claim Repairs** – An increased deductible amount of \$1,000 was proposed for the 2024 budget.
- **01-410-373 Maintenance & Repairs** – Costs associated with cleaning services, office repairs, alarm service, etc. exceeded the 2023 budget of \$10,000. The proposed 2024 budget was \$12,000.
- **01-410-460 Education / Training** – Training costs were low in 2023 due to reduced staffing. It was recommended to budget \$1,000 per officer. Therefore, the proposed 2024 budget was \$14,000.
- **01-410-530 PCCD Grant Expense** – A reflection of the two-year technology grant revenue was budgeted in 2024 at \$55,188.

- **01-410-740 Major Equipment Purchases** – Staggered replacement of seven-year-old police radios is planned in the new year and the purchase of a crime watch analytics program that would link reported crimes into a statistical map to improve response efforts. A public report of incidents would be shared on a weekly basis to know what is happening in any given neighborhood. Chief Tornielli thought the \$3,000 cost for the program would be well worth the expenditure. The proposed 2024 budget totals \$15,000.
- **30-410-000 Police Capital Expense** – Chief Tornielli had one request to replace eighteen rifles. Rifles are generally replaced every ten years and the current rifles are twelve years old. The proposed 2024 budget was \$42,000. Mr. Wert asked if the old rifles could be traded. Chief Tornielli would have them appraised.

Mr. Kaag noted that it appears the police budget will end the year roughly \$500,000 under budget. It was noted that receipt of grant funding skews this information, however, after factoring grant funding into the equation they are projected to end the year below budget. Mr. Lincoln noted that from budget to budget there appears to be a \$500,000 increase. A large portion of this would be the hiring of two new officers and vehicle purchase.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers requested to record in the minutes that the Fall Festival cost the Borough \$14,540, an approximate increase of \$5,000 more than last year. He indicated that this was a good investment based on the \$380,000 grant funding that was received this year thanks to the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary