

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

December 15, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, December 15, 2015 with the following persons present: Council President Carl G. Garman; Vice President Nathalie Kulesa; Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr.; Council Members Philip C. Wert, Grace M. Craze, Christopher C. Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson; Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler; Police Chief Stephen D. Powell; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Recreation Director Helen Moyer; Public Works Director Dean E. Murray; Main Street Manager Christin Kelley; Elm Street Manager Dean L. Rohrbach; Engineer Tom Unger; Administrative Assistant Cathy L. Hoffman. Council Member Elizabeth L. Heckler was not in attendance.

VISITORS:	Jim & Karen Livingood	Residents
	Tina Shenk	Property Owner
	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Audrey Schaeffer	Resident
	Robin Horman	Resident
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Andy Moletress	Resident
	John Turner	Business Owner
	Dave Amato	Resident
	Debra de Freitas	Resident
	James Castoneda	Resident
	Glenda Rosil	Resident
	Reporter	Reading Eagle

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Carl G. Garman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Tina Shenk asked if leaf pickup and street cleaning could be kept on Monday and Tuesday for Penn Avenue in the commercial district.

James T. Rogers asked if the tarp on the roof on Franklin Street had been checked and Mr. Sichler noted that there had been no degradation of materials from what they could tell. Mrs. Schaeffer indicated that she had not had any water infiltration in her basement since the neighboring property had been secured. Mr. Sichler said they would continue to check the property.

John Turner spoke about his support of the CRF, Elm Street and Main Street.

3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

At the November 17th meeting, Ms. Craze indicated that two corrections needed to be made to the November 7th Budget Workshop minutes however after transcribing the specific portion of that meeting, Mrs. Hoffman indicated that the original minutes were stated correctly and therefore would not be changed.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the minutes of November 17, 2015 (regular meeting). **Motion carried 6-0**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the minutes of November 24, 2015 (budget and regular meeting). **Motion carried 6-0**

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the minutes of December 5, 2015 (budget workshop). **Motion carried 6-0**

4. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS TO BE ADOPTED:**

- a. **No parking – Holland Square Alley & Street Sweeping Additions** – This ordinance pertains to the restriction of parking in an alley on trash and recycling days, as well as street sweeping additions, as previously discussed. The draft ordinance has been prepared and is ready to be advertised. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert to advertise the proposed ordinance. **Motion carried 6-0**
- b. **Pets in the Park Ordinance** – A draft ordinance was distributed at the November meeting for Council's consideration. Mr. Wert said that Section 106 which deals with waste states that it is to be disposed of in a sanitary method and he suggested that 'commonly recognized' be added to be more specific. Discussion ensued and it was decided that it should specify the receptacles that are provided in the park. The change will be made and brought back to Council at the January meeting.
- c. **Disruptive Conduct Ordinance** – There were some concerns with this ordinance therefore it was tabled until it can be discussed further with legal assistance.

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Belovich Development** – The work is ongoing regarding this project. Mr. Unger said that he had completed an inspection on December 11th and that 99% of the punch list items have been completed. There was some discussion concerning the recent tree planting and the resulting problems. It was noted that the extra trees will be donated to the Borough for future use. Mr. Sichler will discuss this with the Shade Tree Commission.
- b. **Abandoned Properties** – Mr. Sichler said that one of the homes has been sold, the Chestnut house has been taken back by the Bank who have taken steps to secure the property, and the Franklin property is still intact.
- c. **Board Vacancies/Reappointments** – Mr. Sichler referred to the list of those requiring reappointment as well as the vacancies that still exist and recommended that this be dealt with at the Reorganization meeting on January 4th. Chief Powell noted that the Civil Service Commission is required to reorganize on the 4th as well, therefore asked if Commission member Ronald Bechtel could be reappointed prior to the 4th to make it easier for them.

It was noted that when terms expire on the Civil Service Commission or any other committee, they are not advertised unless the previously appointed individual decides they no longer wish to serve. Mayor Rodriguez suggested that perhaps the seats should be publicized as vacant to give others the opportunity to serve. Mr. Garman asked that at the very least, the terms coming up for reappointment be posted somewhere such as the website.

Chief Powell noted that Mr. Livingood, Civil Service Commission Chairman had spoken with Mr. Bechtel who indicated his willingness to continue to serve. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to reappoint Ronald Bechtel to the Civil Service Commission for the term of January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2021. **Motion carried 6-0**

- d. **Norfolk Southern Graffiti** – Chief Powell reported that most of the graffiti has been taken care of however one spot remains that they could not access.

- e. **Hail Damage** – Mr. Sichler said that the work has been contracted and colors for the replacement materials will be chosen soon.

6. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

- a. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger had one action item: the Oak Terrace water line project final payment. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to authorize the final payment of \$13,222.33 to M & A Excavating. **Motion carried 6-0**
Mr. Unger also referred to the Code Enforcement report however there were no questions.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the Engineer's Report.

Motion carried 6-0.

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

- a. **Solicitor RFP** – Mr. Sichler reported that RFPs had been sent out and the proposals will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 21st.
- b. **2016 Budget** – The budget has been advertised but requires ten days before it can be enacted therefore it will be ready for enactment on the 22nd.
- c. **Reappointments** – This was previously discussed.
- d. **2016 Meeting Schedule** – The proposed meeting schedule was discussed. Mr. Wert recommended that the Shade Tree Commission meet monthly, and/or later in the day. Mr. Sichler said that with the current makeup of the Commission, the current timeframe works well. However after some discussion it was decided to advertise meetings for each month and if a meeting is not necessary to be held, a cancellation notice can be posted. Mrs. Kulesa also noted two changes to the Recreation Commission schedule – the end of July meeting at the pool is no longer necessary and the August meeting should be moved to the first Monday because of National Night Out being scheduled for the first Tuesday each year.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Borough Manager's report.

Motion carried 6-0.

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT & WEST READING COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FOUNDATION:**

Mayor Rodriguez reported the following:

- Copies of two Code Enforcement staff meetings were distributed to Council.
- The annual report of marriage ceremonies performed was also distributed.
- Attended a site visit to the Buttonwood Street Bridge project on November 4th with other officials.
- The Wyomissing Area School District case has been heard by Judge Rowley who will render an opinion in the next month or so.

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Mayor's Report.

Motion carried 6-0.

9. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell referred to his written report as well as the following:
 - The camera project is essentially complete. Still photos from the camera at 5th and Penn were displayed to show the clarity of the cameras. Training has been scheduled for December 22nd.
 - He attended the FOP Lodge 71 Annual Awards Banquet on December 10th where several West Reading officers received awards from their peers:

- A Unit Citation was presented to Sgt. Keith Phillips, Officers Chad Marks, Kyle Bohn and Nick Karetas, for their work in apprehending a robbery suspect.
- CI Joe Brown was awarded the Gallantry Star for his work on Operation Gucci.
- CI Karie Good was awarded the 2015 Officer of the Year award for her outstanding contributions to law enforcement and the community. Chief Powell spoke about her accomplishments and noted that in 25 years he has had the privilege of working with some outstanding law enforcement officers and she counts among them without a doubt. He said he is very proud that she works for the West Reading Police Department.
- Council was asked to approve the hiring of up to three part time police officers.
- An Executive Session was requested for a personnel item.
- A 'Santa Pub Crawl' will be held on December 19th between 3:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. It is being organized by a local bar and so far 900 people have signed up to participate. Chief Powell advised Council that there will be an increased police presence on Penn Avenue because of this.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the hiring of up to three part time officers. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Police Department Report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray referred to his written report and noted the following:
- Work on the bridge at the park is ongoing.
 - Rewiring of the Christmas lighting on Penn Avenue cannot be done by the Prison workshop; they are not permitted to work on anything electrical. Mr. Wert suggested that he check with the local vocation technical schools.
 - Grease in the wet wells was discussed. Mr. Murray noted that it is now being cleaned out twice per year which has helped substantially.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Public Works Director's Report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Burkholder referred to his written report which was distributed just prior to the meeting.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Fire Department Report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation**

Elm Street and Main Street Manager' Report – Mr. Rohrbach referred to their written report and noted the following:

- The DCED contract will expire on June 30, 2016. Part of the contract is \$40,000 for engineering fees to prepare for the projects on South 6th Avenue and the 400 block of Chestnut. This must be submitted with the \$250,000 application that will be requested.
- He asked Chief Powell to assist him with the final report of the camera installation which is required by the Wyomissing Foundation, in order to be in compliance with the contract.
- An open house for the 4th PARR house will be held on December 18th. They will be focusing on Reading Hospital employees and hope to sell it without a realtor.
- The next 'Paint the Town' event is scheduled to begin at 6th and Chestnut and continue up the block toward 5th. The minimum target will be ten homes.

- The Elm Street Christmas Party was a great success and well attended.
- The carriage rides have been overwhelmingly successful and it was noted that the route has expanded into the residential areas.
- Run Santa Run was a huge success again this year even though the numbers were down somewhat over last year.
- Art Plus Gallery has invited Council to attend their re-opening on January 8th at 5:00 p.m.
- The next CRF meeting will be held on Thursday, December 17th at 7:00 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Elm Street and Main Street Managers' Reports and the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation Report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

10. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer referred to her written report and spoke about the following:

- Thanked everyone for their support and participation for the Christmas Tree Lighting event.
- The Holiday Decorating Contest will be judged on December 18th.
- Requested a lifetime pool membership for Elizabeth Heckler. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the gift of a lifetime pool membership for Mrs. Heckler, as discussed at the budget meeting. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Recreation Commission Report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert spoke about the continuing legal analysis of the codification. Additional Planning Commission meetings have been scheduled in 2016 in order to get through this process as quickly as possible. There were no questions.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Planning Commission report. **Motion carried.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – It was noted that the Committee had just met on the 14th, therefore the minutes have not yet been prepared.
- d. **Safety Committee** – There was some discussion concerning the CPR training which is provided at no cost for staff, however others would be required to pay.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Safety Committee report. **Motion carried.**

- e. **Environmental Advisory Committee** – Mr. Sichler noted that recycling bins have not been ordered due to the funds not being released from Harrisburg.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to accept the Environmental Advisory Committee report. **Motion carried.**

- f. **Non Uniform Pension Committee** – Mr. Sichler said that the Committee had met and discussed the RFP for a new pension administrator, which was also decided by the Police Pension Committee, based on the performance of the current fund. The next step is to finalize the pension ordinance with the most recent changes and Mr. Sichler asked if Mr. Becker could finalize this before the end

of the year rather than waiting for the new solicitor to be chosen. Council decided that it should move forward as soon as possible therefore a draft will be ready for the January Council meeting. It was also noted that the Committee minutes contained two typographical errors.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Non Union Pension Committee report with the changes as noted. **Motion carried 6-0.**

11. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

a. **Revenues with Comparison to Budget:**

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget Report for the eleven months ending 11/30/2015. **Motion carried 6-0.**

b. **Payment Approval Report:**

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Payment Approval Report for 11/18/2015 - 12/10/2015. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Garman made note that Katie Martino, who had attended the last Council meeting, was able to raise enough funds to purchase toys for 62 children. He thanked her for her efforts and also thanked those who donated.

12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. to discuss personnel. When the meeting reconvened at 9:14 p.m., no action was taken.

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

James T. Rogers asked about the 'dogs in the park' ordinance and specifically the disposal of waste. He asked why the Borough's existing regulations aren't sufficient and it was noted that the existing regulation pertains specifically to their own property, not public property. Discussion ensued and "designated receptacle" was recommended.

John Turner spoke about the potholes that were mentioned earlier and suggested that they may be a result of drilling by the gas company. Mr. Herbert asked if anyone inspects street excavations that are done by the gas company. Discussion ensued and others commented about these situations. It was recommended that it be brought to the Codes Department's attention so they can address it. Permits are required and there are regulations in place however they are in the process of being reviewed.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant