

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

March 21, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, March 21, 2017 with the following persons present: Council President Carl G. Garman; Council Vice-President Nathalie Kulesa; Council Members Grace M. Craze; Suzanne Thompson; Nicholas F. Imbesi; Christopher C. Lincoln; Philip C. Wert; Borough Manager Cathy L. Hoffman; Police Chief Stephen D. Powell; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Solicitor Charles Haws ; Borough Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Recreation Director Helen Moyer, Engineer Tom Unger and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia J. Madeira. Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr. and Dean Rohrbach were unable to attend.

VISITORS:	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Karen Livingood	Resident
	Jenna Heister	Resident
	Christina Shenk	Business Owner
	Andy Moletress	Resident
	Hunter Beane	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Aaron Gantz	Berks Country Joint Expedited Approval Process
	Christopher Herr	Mallie, LLP

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The council meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
Mrs. Livingood thanked the Public Works Department for their recent snow removal efforts. Mrs. Livingood also expressed concern over the 200, 300 and 400 blocks of Sycamore Road with regards to nuisance vehicles, illegal parking and parking on the grass. Mrs. Livingood suggested possible ordinance modifications to include stronger penalties.

Mrs. Kulesa also noted trash containers are remaining in the alley through Sunday in most instances.

Chief Powell requested residents notify the Police Department of illegally parked vehicles to dispatch an officer to the area.

Ms. Shenk noted the 300 and 400 blocks of Penn Avenue, residents and owners, receiving a letter from the Code Department regarding trash/recycling material blowing through the Cherry Street/Penn Avenue area. Ms. Shenk would like to see uniform recycling containers with lids to prevent the recycling material from blowing around the neighborhood.

Ms. Shenk requested permission to place blue ribbons tied to Penn Avenue light posts during the month of May to promote awareness of Police and Fire Departments.

Motion to allow the L.O.V.E. Team to place blue ribbons tied to light posts on Penn Avenue for the month of May only. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Rogers noted an executive session was held during the February 28, 2017 Council meeting with Chip Lutz owner of the Rite-Aid Shopping Center and due to the session being classified he can only make assumptions regarding plans for the shopping center. Mr. Garman reiterated comments may not be made on executive session topics.

Mr. Moletress inquired with Mr. Murray of plans to paint the light posts on Penn Avenue and the possibility of blue ribbons interfering with this progress. Mr. Murray stated the schedule has not yet been completed and he will modify the schedule accordingly.

Mr. Rogers also noted the great job on snow removal, however questioned the location of snow dumping. Mr. Murray noted that although it is being dumped at the fishing dock area however maintaining the required filtration distance from the river.

Mr. Herbert congratulated the Public Works Department on their snow removal efforts exceeding most other municipalities. However, Mr. Herbert stated the Code Department did not fully check sidewalks for snow removal. He noted mounds of snow at businesses along Penn Avenue blocking sidewalks and causing pedestrians to walk into the street. Mr. Herbert stated the snow violation penalty being too lenient and should possibly be increased. Mr. Garman stated discussions on possible ordinance revisions would be placed on the agenda for next month's meeting. Mrs. Hoffman suggested Traffic and Infrastructure review the ordinance to create modifications prior to presenting to Council.

3. **MALLIE, LLP AUDIT PRESENTATION:**

Mr. Herr stated the 2016 audit encountered no significant difficulties and except for fixed assets there were no issues. The large number trends are the general fund decrease of 1.1 million due to revenue that did not repeat such as hail damage insurance and vehicle damage monies received in 2015. Funding for hail damage repairs to buildings were expended in 2016. However, tax revenue increased and Capital projects increased due to the lack of activity in 2016. Enterprise fund (water/sewer) revenues were down, which is based on usage and weather. Also, the bond refinance created a decrease in expenditures.

Motion to accept the 2016 audit report. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion to approve Council minutes of February 21, 2017 regular meeting and the February 28, 2017 second meeting. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

5. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

Motion to adopt Ordinance 1071 Street Sweeping. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Land Acquisition Phase I Site Assessment** – Mrs. Hoffman stated there is nothing new to report at this time.

7. **CONSULTANTS REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Haws reported that all items for discussion were covered elsewhere on the agenda. Motion to approve the Solicitor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**
- b. **Engineer's Report** – Mr. Unger stated he was unable to attend last months meeting and in an effort to better serve the Borough he introduced Craig Momose who is a civil engineer familiar with projects within the Borough to attend Council meetings in his absence.
 1. **Parkview Road Bridge Permit Application** – The general permit to allow work above the stream has been submitted to the state. Once the permit is obtained an advertisement can be placed to request proposals.

2. **Buttonwood Street Paving** – New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc. has signed the contract and a preconstruction meeting is scheduled on March 28, 2017. The anticipated start date will be the first week of April and weather permitting the project should be completed by the end of the same week.

Discussions ensued on utilizing the additional proceeds towards lighting and landscaping. Mr. Murray is currently in contact with Met-Ed regarding lighting and Mr. Unger will investigate aesthetic options.

3. **Vanity Fair Annexation** – A revised plan has not yet been submitted by Gilmore Associates.
4. **Pump Station Flow Meter** – The meter is being shipped on April 7th and will be installed by Stover Sensor Controls.
5. **Alley Sewer & Paving** – Commonwealth Financing Authority has delayed grant notification due to the number of applications received. The anticipated notification date has been moved to March 29th.
6. **Fire Hydrant Flow Testing** – Testing training has been postponed due to weather. This has been rescheduled to the week of March 29th.

Motion to approve the Engineer's Report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

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

- a. **Berks County Joint Expedited Approval Process (JEAP)** – Aaron Gantz explained an economic partnership to expedite the joint municipal approval process regarding the Vanity Fair project. A meeting of all approving bodies, Borough of Wyomissing, Borough of West Reading, PennDOT, Conservation District, Department of Environmental Protection, utility companies, etc., will be held at the County Community Board Room on April 17, 2017 at 1:30 PM. The partnership requests two representatives from West Reading to be in attendance as well as the Borough Engineer. Council members Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Imbesi will attend along with Mr. Unger. Mrs. Hoffman requested authorization to write the required letter of Council's agreement for this project.

Motion to grant authorization for the Borough Manager to write a letter of Council's agreement to this project. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **IT Firewall/Switch Purchase** – It has been highly recommended by the IT company to replace the firewall and two switches serving the Borough hall building in order to prevent the frequent network/system crashes experienced on a weekly basis. The additional cost for these components exceeds the previously approved wiring budget of \$20,000 by \$4277. Mrs. Hoffman requested authorization to purchase the additional components.

Ms. Craze inquired as to additional quotes/estimates being received. Mrs. Hoffman stated the IT company is most familiar with our current system issues and the components needed. Mrs. Kulesa stated it is best to utilize the company familiar with the system.

Motion to allow the additional \$4277 expenditure for the additional components. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 6-1**, Ms. Craze opposed.

- c. **Environmental Advisory Council Appointment** – Mr. Wert reported Jenna Heister has expressed an interest in serving on this committee, which has had a long-term vacancy. Ms. Heister who was in attendance stated she has resided within the Borough since last summer and is currently employed as a marketing manager and esthetician at United Artist Salon.

Motion to approve the appointment of Ms. Heister to the Environmental Advisory Council. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0**.

Motion to approve the Borough Manager's Report. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0**.

9. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Nothing reported.

10. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell stated he had one action item, the Armed Forces Day Parade to be held on May 20th. The route is planned from 8th & Penn Avenue to 3rd Avenue to Spruce Street to 7th Avenue. Mrs. Hoffman will request PennDOT approval to close Penn Avenue for the parade, however there is concern due to the entire length of Penn Avenue being the secondary detour route for the Penn Street Bridge project. Chief Powell requested approval to waive Police Department and Public Works Department fees for this event.

Motion to approve the Armed Forces Day Parade route and waiver of Police Department and Public Works Department associated costs. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0**.

Chief Powell spoke to a representative of the Ragnar Relay Race today who informed him there would be teams of 12 runners dispersed over a 12-hour period. Flaggers are planned at intersections to safely cross the runners since traffic will not be interrupted. Chief Powell provided the representative with his cell phone should the need arise during this event.

Chief Powell reported the door access equipment installation is underway; they plan to install cabling and security cameras on Friday. They anticipate activation of the system next month.

Mr. Garman inquired as to the Parking Enforcement Officer's schedule being modified on Friday, March 11th. Chief Powell reported eleven citations were issued between the hours of 5:00 – 9:00 PM Borough wide. Additional trial runs and data will be needed prior to potentially hiring a part-time evening/weekend Parking Enforcement Officer.

Motion to approve the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0**.

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray reported due to the warm weather forecasted following the recent snow event only one front end loader was rented to remove snow from the streets. Mr. Murray also noted the new graffiti on Penn Avenue will be addressed in the near future, he will

be requesting permission from Norfolk Southern to remove graffiti from the railroad bridge.

Mr. Wert reported the streetlight is still out in front of Berkshire Village. Mr. Murray stated there is a list of streetlights Met-Ed needs to address throughout the Borough. Mr. Murray will be requesting in the Public Works newsletter section for residents to report any street light issues.

Motion to approve the Public Works report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Burkholder had nothing to add to his report and there were no questions. Chief Burkholder stated Chicken BBQ tickets are available for \$8 each on April 9th, Palm Sunday.

Motion to approve the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – In Mr. Rohrbach's absence Mr. Moletress reported the meeting had been cancelled due to snow. The budget should be approved during the next meeting.

Mr. Garman inquired as to progression of planned events in the absence of a Main Street Manager. Mr. Wert stated preparations are currently on track. Ms. Shenk reported new guidelines would be in place for the new Main Street Manager.

Motion to approve the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation Elm Street Manager report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mrs. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

11. **COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer stated she had a few action items, she requested a motion to accept the summer employee list, noting the highlighted names are new employees.

Motion to accept the list of summer Playground, Pool, Front Desk and Concession Stand employees. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

The second action item Mrs. Moyer requested was waiving Pavilion rental fees for the Wyomissing Area Education Foundation to honor teachers from the Wyomissing School District and West Reading Elementary event to be held on June 3rd.

Mrs. Kulesa suggested the Recreation Commission review their policy to reduce the fee for non-profit functions in the future to cover the cost of supplies.

Motion to approve waiving Pavilion rental fee for the Wyomissing Education Foundation event on June 3rd. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert.

Mrs. Moyer stated the commission has raised \$2500 of the \$10,000 goal for the Playground program. Tickets are still available for the fudge sale and plans are underway for the Chili Cook-Off to be held on October 7th. Mrs. Moyer stated she has a list of residents who are willing to sponsor a child in need to allow their participation in the summer playground program.

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

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert stated they are awaiting revised plans for the Vanity Fair project.

Mr. Herbert mentioned his recent visit to the City of Reading's Planning Commission meeting and a discussion concerning the Parkview Bridge weight limit restriction with the owner of a local business. The City is willing to move or modify signage to prevent over weight trucks from crossing the bridge.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert reported there was an absence of a quorum, however they did discuss a number of items, including list of properties.

Mr. Imbesi inquired as to a vacancy on this board for a Council member. Mrs. Hoffman stated only one Council member is currently on the board; Mr. Wert expressed concern on the need for an odd number for a quorum.

Motion to approve Mr. Imbesi as a member of the Economic Development Committee. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to approve the Economic Development Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Environmental Advisory Committee** – Mr. Wert discussed the "Adopt a Highway" program to clean streets and the possibility of Borough residents adopting a street/block to clean once or twice per month.

Ms. Shenk volunteered the L.O.V.E. team to adopt Penn Avenue. Mrs. Moyer suggested expanding this during the Recreation Commission's Earth Day Event to clean recreation areas. Mrs. Thompson will also request participation/volunteers during the Elm Street Earth Day event.

Motion to approve the Environmental Advisory Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **Traffic Committee & Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Lincoln stated the handicap space located at 704 Penn Avenue, in front of the former Commonwealth Auto location, appears to be rarely used and there is an additional handicap space in a nearby location. The Traffic Committee made a recommendation to Council to approve the removal of this handicap space.

Motion to remove the handicap space in front of 704 Penn Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Lincoln stated the Buttonwood Street Bridge opening has been delayed to allow

completion of the Buttonwood Street paving project. The contract states the bridge must reopen by April 24th and it appears from Mr. Unger's report that paving should be completed the first week of April.

Mr. Lincoln expressed concern regarding PennDOT approving closures of Penn Avenue during the three-year Penn Street Bridge repair project for events held on Penn Avenue, such as Armed Forces Day Parade, Art on the Avenue, etc., due to Penn Avenue being a secondary detour route.

Motion to approve the Traffic Committee and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – Meeting was cancelled due to storm.
- g. **Finance Committee** – Ms. Craze stated a quorum was unavailable for this meeting. Discussions on the meeting being open to the public ensued due to personnel issues as Mr. Herbert was in attendance of this meeting. Mr. Haws stated items that are sensitive in nature such as health care or settlements should remain private. Mr. Garman stated the Borough Manager and Treasurer should be responsible to redact names from sensitive reports. The committee currently is to consist of two Council members, three residents, Borough Manager and Treasurer. Ms. Shenk suggested Council Member Mr. Imbesi have a seat on the Committee due to his finance background, however neither Ms. Craze nor Ms. Thompson were willing to relinquish their seats. Mr. Garman suggested changing the time of the meeting to provide the opportunity for a financial professional to join the committee. Mrs. Rentschler suggested the meeting be held on the Monday prior to Council meeting to allow the committee to review payment approval reports.

Motion to change Finance Committee meetings to the third Monday of the month at 5:30 PM. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Craze nominated Mr. Herbert to serve as a member of the Finance Committee. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 5-2**, Mr. Imbesi and Mrs. Kulesa opposed. Mrs. Hoffman inquired if Mr. Herbert would be submitting a letter of interest and he indicated he would.

Motion to approve the Finance Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- h. **Safety Committee** – No questions on the report.

Motion to approve the Safety Committee minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

12. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Revenues with Comparison to Budget (2 months ending 2/28/2017)** – Mr. Imbesi inquired as to page 11 Building Claim Repairs exceeding the budget by 1350%, Mrs. Rentschler stated this was for hail damage repairs that was budgeted in 2016.

Motion to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and

seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Payment Approval Report (2/22/2017 to 3/17/2017 & 3/18/2017 to 3/21/2017)** – Ms. Craze requested clarification as to the mileage reimbursement to NJ class being in their contract. Chief Powell reported this was due to the officer using his personal vehicle since the fleet is down one vehicle. Also, Ms. Craze inquired as to the Roto Hammer rental, Mr. Murray stated this was due to the shop equipment being inoperable.

Motion to approve Payment Approval Report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to executive session at 9:50 p.m. to discuss personnel and land acquisition. When Council reconvened at 10:30 p.m. Mr. Garman stated they discussed personnel and land acquisition litigation items.

Motion to receive a list of candidates for hire for the Police Department. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Herbert expanded on the trash issue along Penn Avenue discussed earlier; the 200 block of Penn Avenue near the billboards should be monitored closely for growth to maintain the area to prevent the collection of rubbish in this area.

Hunter Beane suggested possibly modifying the Finance Committee Ordinance to allow Mr. Imbesi with his expertise to be a part of this committee. Mr. Garman stated they would look into modifying the ordinance.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn meeting at 10:33 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager