

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

December 18, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, December 18, 2018 with the following persons present: Council President Nicholas Imbesi; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Christopher Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson, Nicholas Gardecki, Kirk Mullen; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Solicitor Charles Haws; Police Chief Stephen Powell; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Engineer Tom Unger; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliff; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman, and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira.

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| VISITORS: | Oswald Herbert | Resident |
| | Karen Livingood | Resident |
| | Nathalie Kulesa | Resident |
| | Michael Morrill | Resident |
| | Joseph Scoboria | Resident |
| | Grace Craze | Resident |
| | Dan Roberts | Artist |
| | Mark Woodward | Business Owner |
| | Gabe & Kacey Lloyd | Reading Radsport |
| | Reading Eagle Reporter | |

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Nicholas Imbesi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Art Plus Gallery artist Dan Roberts spoke of his January exhibit, opening on January 11, 2019 at the Art Plus Gallery called the “Faces of West Reading”. Mr. Roberts has compiled approximately 250 black and white photos of people who live, work or have visited West Reading during the past year and will be assembling a series of paintings of some of those faces. Mr. Roberts encouraged anyone who has not visited the Art Plus Gallery to do so and noted recent interest in the Mural Corridor drawing visitors from out of the area.

Mr. Herbert spoke at length about his concern regarding the advertised budget, which nearly depletes the General Fund reserves and balancing of the budget with parking fines and increased taxes.

Ms. Craze also expressed concern surrounding the advertised budget with regards to the increased taxes, water and sewer rates and failure to reduce expenditures.

Nicholas Gardecki joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**
Motion to approve the November 20, 2018 Council minutes and the November 27, 2018 Budget minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**
4. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**
 - a. Ordinance 1101 Business Privilege Tax Amendment – Motion to adopt Ordinance 1101. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. Ordinance 1102 Volunteer Service Credit Program – Motion adopt Ordinance 1102. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- c. Ordinance 1103 2019 Tax Rate Amendment – Motion to adopt Ordinance 1103. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- d. Ordinance 1104 Water Rate Amendment – Motion to adopt Ordinance 1104. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- e. Ordinance 1105 Sewer Rate Amendment – Motion to adopt Ordinance 1105. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

5. **CONSULTANT’S REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor’s Report** - Mr. Haws referred to the written report provided this evening with two action items. The first of which was to vote on the enactment of the Business Privilege Tax Ordinance recently voted on and adopted and the second pertained to acceptance of the Folino Conditional Use Decision.

Motion to approve the 135 Juniata Street Folino Conditional Use Decision. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to approve the Solicitor’s report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Gardecki. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger referred to the written report and noted the following:
 - **Parkview Road Bridge** – This project has been closed out by the County and approved by the State to provide the full contract amount of \$192,482 of Liquid Fuels funding.
 - **Green Light Go** – The submittal to PennDOT has been completed for the traffic signal improvements along Penn Avenue. A request to authorize the advertisement of the bid package and to receive bids on January 9, 2019 was presented to Borough Council with award scheduled for the January 15, 2019 Council meeting. Approval of the construction administration proposal in the amount of \$14,265 was also requested.

Motion to approve the construction administration services not to exceed \$14,265. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to authorize advertisement to receive bids on January 9, 2019. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to approve the Engineer/Code Enforcement report. **Moved** by Mr. Gardecki and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Haws and Mr. Unger departed the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to executive session at 7:23 p.m. to discuss a contract item. Council reconvened at 7:48 p.m. and Mr. Imbesi announced Council’s discussion regarding charges for Police and Public Works Department services during future Criterium bicycle race events.

Motion was made to approve the Police Department \$75 per hour, per officer rate and Public Works Department \$55 per hour, per crewmember rate through the December 31, 2020 expiration of union contracts, at which time the rates will be reevaluated. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- a. **2019 Meeting Dates** – Mrs. Hoffman referred to the list of 2019 meeting dates and requested authorization to advertise the schedule. Mr. Wert noted a number of committee meetings that begin at 6:00 p.m. and will inquire with various committee members to potentially revise the meeting start time from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Motion to approve and authorize advertisement of the 2019-meeting schedule. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Fire Chief Mark Burkholder joined the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

- b. **Animal Rescue League** – A third Animal Rescue League contract proposal was received last week and provided to Council for review. The new proposal offers a third option of a \$1500 base fee with cost for services rendered billed on a monthly basis. Council members briefly discussed alternate options and a meeting scheduled on January 8, 2019 at the Center for Excellence in Local Government to discuss a potential countywide program.

A motion was made to table further discussions regarding animal control services until the January Council meeting. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **2019 Appointments/Reappointments** – A list of 2019 Appointments/Reappointments was provided to Council for review. Two letters of interest have been received for the Finance or Economic Development Committees and the Joint Municipal Authority. Also, Western Berks Water Authority requested in writing to reappoint Mike Hart to serve another term as an Authority Board Member. Robert Lockyer's letter of interest and resume indicates his background in finance. Richard Sichler's letter of interest and resume indicates his background and strength in solid waste and wastewater management.

A motion was made to appoint Robert Lockyer to the Finance Committee. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

A motion was made to reappoint Mike Hart to the Western Berks Water Authority Board. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

A motion was made to reappoint Oswald Herbert to the Joint Municipal Authority Board. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson, there was no second to the motion and therefore it failed.

A motion was made to appoint Richard Sichler to the Joint Municipal Authority Board. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Wert. **In favor of the motion:** Mr. Wert, Mr. Mullen, Mr. Gardecki, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Imbesi. **Against the motion:** Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 5-1.**

Motion to approve the 2019 list of appointments and reappointments not previously discussed. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to approve the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** The Mayor noted ten pledges received to date of \$1000 towards the purchase of a Police vehicle. Also, support has been shown by the owner of Tina's Salon to hold a designer purse bingo event to raise money for this cause. The potential date and location for the event is March 17, 2019 at the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

Mayor Kearney thanked all elected officials and staff for their dedication and efforts to the West Reading community and particularly noted the amount of time the Council President devotes to his position and the benefit of having a Traffic Engineer to Chair the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee.

Motion to approve the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

9. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Mr. Imbesi also thanked all elected officials and staff for their devotion to the community. Clarification was provided as to the process taken to balance a budget given the Borough's location and a desire to continue to provide a high level of service to Borough residents.

Motion to approve the Council President's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

10. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell provided a verbal report for October and November, which totaled 595 reportable calls, 42 arrests and 297 traffic citations. There were 13 special details performed, which contributed to the number of traffic citations issued. Details performed in the vicinity of 2nd and Penn Avenue resulted in a number of excessive speed citations near a dangerous pedestrian crosswalk. Mr. Imbesi noted a meeting that has been requested through Mark Rozzi's office to schedule an onsite visit with PennDOT to discuss viable safety options for this area.

Motion to approve the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray referred to the written report and there were no comments.

Motion to approve the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Burkholder referred to the written report and there were no comments.

Motion to approve the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Business owner Mark Woodward joined the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

- d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Ratcliffe noted a recap of upcoming events within the written report and stated allocation of the recently awarded \$50,000 BB&T Grant has been earmarked for the parking kiosk plans and potential grant fund matches for the recently applied for Vision and Strategic Plan grants.

Motion to approve the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

11. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Kulesa was in attendance to answer questions on behalf of the Recreation Commission and noted the gift bags on the table were provided by the Recreation Commission as a thank you for your services. There were no comments.

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

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert noted there was no official business for the December meeting and the time was used as a work session. Discussions regarding establishment of a Historic Architectural Review Board continued with scheduling of a meeting with the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission in late January. Also, review of amendments to the solicitation ordinance continues.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Gardecki. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert stated there are currently no foreclosed or blighted residential properties being monitored. A representative from the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance will be attending the January meeting to discuss potential development of the Buttonwood Street Gateway.

Motion to approve the Economic Development Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Wert reminded Council members of the Energy Audit findings and possible implementation of low-cost improvements that could be performed in-house. Also, Earth Day preparations were discussed with Mr. Ratcliffe administering the 2019 event.

Motion to approve the Environmental Advisory Council report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Traffic & Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Lincoln referred to the written report and noted the following:

- Discussions continued on the topic of parking. A special meeting has been scheduled on January 23, 2019 with the Infrastructure, Planning and Main Street members to discuss implementation of technical details such as notification, signage, wayfinding and technical details.
- Committee members discussed utility work parking restrictions with inactivity and decided to create a new policy. The temporary no parking signs will be removed if work does not commence one-hour after the posted time.
- Work is ongoing with the Green Light Go traffic signal improvement along Penn Avenue, which must be completed by the end of June 2019.
- PennDOT plans to repave Penn Avenue in the spring of 2019 and has requested a map of parking stall lines. It was decided to perform a survey of pavement markings to correct deficiencies.

Mr. Wert suggested consideration be given to enhancement of the crosswalk areas similar to that of Sinking Spring. Mr. Lincoln noted careful evaluation of the materials used is needed as well as funding within the budget for the additional cost. Mr. Lincoln will review potential grant opportunities for crosswalk improvements.

Motion to approve the Traffic & Infrastructure report. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray referred to the written report and there were no comments.

Motion to approve the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- g. **Finance Committee** – Mr. Imbesi announced cancellation of the December meeting since the budget had been advertised and noted a projected year end 2019 General Fund account balance with a surplus of \$777,174, the first time in five-years.

12. TREASURER'S REPORT:

- a. **2019 Budget** – Mr. Imbesi entertained a motion to approve the advertised 2019 budget. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Gardecki. **In favor of the motion:** Mr. Wert, Mr. Mullen, Mr. Gardecki, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Imbesi. **Against the motion:** Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 5-1.**

Ms. Thompson read a prepared statement that detailed her concern regarding the recent revisions to the West Reading Revitalization Foundation Bylaws and indicated that this action may have negative consequences. She recommended reverting to the previous bylaws, which will potentially attract funders to the organization. She asked that her statement become part of the meeting minutes. Her statement can be found on page 8 of these minutes.

- b. **Financial Statement** - There were no comments on the financial statement ending 11/30/18.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 11/30/18. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Payment Approval Report 11/18/18 to 12/13/18 & 12/14/18 to 12/18/18** – There were no comments.

Motion to approve Payment Approval report 11/18/18 to 12/13/18 & 12/14/18 to 12/18/18. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**

13. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mark Woodward of West Reading Tavern apprised Council of his plans for a fifth annual Santa Bar Crawl event planned on Saturday, December 22, 2018 from 4:00 – 11:00 p.m. The Ballroom has been rented for two swing band performances and a bus will be circling the Borough to various locations, including 3rd & Spruce Café. The Police Department has determined an additional officer is necessary for this event. Mr. Woodward requested an estimated bill in advance of the events to avoid any surprises. Chief Powell stated the fee would be \$75 per hour for one officer to be staffed for the duration of the event.

Mr. Woodward also spoke of the Ice & Spice event planned on January 26 and 27, 2019 to perform live ice carvings between the hours of Noon to 5:00 p.m. and requested permission to use a four-wheeler to maneuver ice blocks to the various 20 locations along Penn Avenue. Chief Powell stated permission could not be granted for an unlicensed vehicle to be on a state road. Mr. Woodward indicated alternate options would be researched for this task and again requested an estimate of fees be submitted in advance.

Motion to approve the Ice & Spice Event on January 26 and 27, 2019. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to waive the Special Event fee of \$50 for the Ice & Spice event. **Moved** by Mr. Mullen and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **In favor of the motion:** Mr. Mullen, Ms. Thompson, Mr. Gardecki, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Imbesi. **Against the motion:** Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 5-1.**

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Mullen. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Manager

Suzanne Thompson Member of Council
Statement to be included in the record of these Borough Council proceedings
December 18, 2018

Matters Re: The 2019 Borough Budget and West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation

In 2018, the WRCRF was granted support by the Borough in the amount of \$97,760 (Elm Street, Main Street and in-kind services combined). According to the advertised 2019 Budget, the Borough has appropriated \$150,635 to the WRCRF - \$52,875 more than provided in 2018, in a time when all the heads of Borough department have been asked to cut back.

The WRCRF has also received a donation of unrestricted funds in the amount \$50,000 and I would suggest that part or all of those funds be used as its 'Plan B' should the Wyomissing Foundation (Plan A) decline to fund the 2 \$25,000 match amounts needed should the DCED grants come through.

Even as the Borough has this year made more money accessible the WRCRF, the WRCRF has re-written its by-laws in a way that severely limits Council's fiduciary oversight on behalf of its constituents and, as well, effectively limits the WRCRF's ability to attract funding.

The WRCRF, as was stated, wants a 'more modern, less rigid approach," especially as to Board representation, but foundations, government entities, etc. want credentials and measureable results.

Almost always, before any other consideration, funding sources look first to an organization's by-laws, Board representation, mission, accounts, budget, program plans, verified audits, and personnel policies, and a track record, done in a certain way to attain a successful end. One of the most important aspects of Board make-up re: the mission of Foundation's such as the WRCRF, is membership, in equal shares, showing community, government, and business support, working together, from the WRCRF's stated area of service.

Just a few years ago, it was Dean Rohrbach who insisted that, no matter how good he was, he couldn't even get through the door, much less raise money for the WRCRF without these vital 'tools of the trade.' Borough Council, using Dean's specifications, insisted on appropriate changes to the by-laws, and mandated the other reporting as well. Dean got what he said he needed, and surely no one can argue with his results.

Dean is gone now, and at least in the short term, the WRCRF – and the Borough – will be hampered by his absence. For many years I successfully did for nonprofits the work that, until recently, Dean did for West Reading so very well. The only WRCRF by-law change made that Dean would have agreed with is the expansion of the Board to include more members. I would urge the WRCRF not to hamper itself further by tampering with what works.

The WRCRF receives substantial and largely unrestricted monies from the Borough, which will do neither organization any good if the WRCRF cannot in turn raise funds from other sources. My only concern and my primary responsibility is the oversight and stewardship of Borough resources on behalf of the residents of West Reading. That is why I am speaking up about this now.

Respectfully Submitted for the record,


Suzanne Thompson