

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

March 19, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 with the following persons present: Council President Nicholas Imbesi; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Christopher Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson, David Amato, Nicholas Gardecki; Mayor Andrew Kearney; Solicitor Charles Haws; Police Chief Stephen Powell; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Recreation Director Helen Moyer; Engineer Tom Unger; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliff; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira.

VISITORS:	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Grace Craze	Resident
	Andrew Moletress	Resident
	John Harvey	Resident
	Douglas Zeeger	Resident
	Karen Livingood	Resident
	Susan Fisher	Resident
	Tina Shenk	Property/Business Owner
	Mark Woodward	Property/Business Owner (arrived 7:58 p.m.)
	Troy Hatt	Fire Code Official
	Beth Auman	Friends of Reading Hospital
	Reading Eagle Reporter	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Nicholas Imbesi called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **FRIENDS OF READING HOSPITAL:** Beth Auman, event chairperson for the 2019 Reading Hospital Road Run described plans for a non-profit, multi-municipal road run through West Reading, Wyomissing, Spring Township and the City of Reading on Sunday October 13, 2019 beginning at the Reading Hospital at 8:00 a.m. for a half marathon and 9:00 a.m. for the 5K. A map of the route was provided to Council, Chief Powell stated he does not foresee any issues with the planned course, due to minimal Sunday morning traffic and the avoidance of the Farmers' Market area. Ms. Auman welcomed any concessions to fees associated with this event other than labor costs to allow proceeds to go to program funding. In the past the Friends of Reading Hospital has provided a number of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) to the Wyomissing School District and West Reading Police Department.

Mr. Imbesi recommended approval of the date and course today with the actual costs associated with this event to be discussed at a later date.

Motion to approve the Friends of Reading Hospital 2019 Road Run on Sunday, October 13, 2019 beginning at 8:00 a.m. at the Reading Hospital. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Tina Shenk requested Council to be consistent with special event costs due to the number of requests that have been received.
4. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**
Motion to approve the February 19, 2019 Council minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Amato. **Motion carried 6-0.**
5. **COUNCIL VACANCY:** Mr. Imbesi stated Council has received Kirk Mullen's resignation letter, dated March 13, 2019. Mr. Imbesi stated the vacancy must be filled within 30 days of accepting this

resignation. Letters of interest will be accepted until April 11, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. to allow Council to review and interview candidates during the regular Council meeting on April 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. This appointment would fill the vacancy through December 31, 2019, at which time an elected official placed on the November ballot would complete the two-year term through December 31, 2021.

Motion to accept Kirk Mullen's resignation letter, dated March 13, 2019. **Moved** by Mr. Amato and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Imbesi stated this unfortunate event for the Borough of West Reading paints a picture of the opioid crises facing the nation. Concern was expressed for the people affected by Mr. Mullen's actions at the drug store and in the community and Mr. Imbesi hopes to move forward quickly to resume the hard work necessary at the Council table.

6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance 1107 International Fire Code Amendment** – An amendment to designate the 2015 edition of the International Fire Code as the Fire Prevention Code of the Borough of West Reading.

Motion to approve Ordinance 1107. **Moved** by Mr. Amato and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **CONSULTANT'S REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** - Mr. Haws referred to the written report and there were no comments.

Motion to approve the Solicitor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger referred to the written report and noted the Fifth Avenue/Museum Road Paving Project has been awarded, and contracts have been executed. Authorization is needed to proceed with construction in mid to late April.

Motion to authorize a notice to proceed for the Fifth Avenue/Museum Road Paving Project. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Amato. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Mr. Imbesi reported an executive session held prior to the Council meeting to discuss personnel and possible litigation items. There is no action needed at this time.

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

9. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:** In Mrs. Hoffman's absence, Mr. Imbesi reviewed the following items:

- a. **Wildlife Services Agreement** – The annual cooperative service agreement allows the United States Department of Agriculture to control Canadian Goose activity along the Wyomissing Creek. Mr. Lincoln inquired as to a current no feeding waterfowl policy, which is referenced in Attachment A. A review of policies will be conducted to ensure there is active enforcement of this requirement.

Motion to execute the Cooperative Service Agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Gardecki. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **DCED Keystone Communities Program** – The Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development approved the Keystone Communities Program grant in the amount of \$25,000. A commitment

letter and contract must be signed and returned to their office to accept the grant contract. There are no matching funds required for this grant.

Motion to accept the DCED Keystone Communities Program grant contract. **Moved** by Mr. Amato and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Kearney had nothing new to report.

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

11. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

- a. **NIMS Training/Certification** – Council Vice President, Philip Wert was the only member of Council who completed their NIMS training and certifications. Mr. Imbesi requested the remaining Council members, including him, to complete their certifications prior to the April meeting to avoid scheduling a second April Council meeting to jointly bring laptops to Council Chambers to take the course(s) together.
- b. **Voting Precincts** – The Board of Elections has responded to Council's request to alter precinct boundary lines and renumber voting precincts. Due to a new voting system and the upcoming election of three County Commissioners, the Board requested deferment of this request until January of 2020. Mr. Imbesi met with the Board of Elections Director and noted the precincts are based on the number of registered voters as opposed to Census information. Also, the Director requested permission to host a demonstration of the new voting machines at Borough Hall.

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

12. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell referred to his written report and noted the following:
 - Contact was made with the Animal Rescue League over the weekend for a stray dog and information was provided to the Administration Department to track activity and expenses.
 - A map of the Borough was provided this evening, which divides the area into six zones to allow better tracking of Police activity.
 - Chief Powell thanked Tina Shenk and the Love Team for hosting a Designer Bag Bingo event last weekend, which attracted approximately 200 people, to raise money to purchase a new Police vehicle.
 - United Public Safety alerted the Police Department that as of December 31, 2019 Verizon would discontinue the 4G-voice band on the parking ticket handheld device. This device is approximately four-years old and potentially at the end of its life span. A \$400 credit has been offered to upgrade to a newer device, which provides a new feature to scan license plates. Chief Powell noted sufficient revenue has been generated to cover the purchase price cost of \$3,149.88.

Motion to approve the purchase of a CitePro handheld parking enforcement device not to exceed \$3,149.88. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray referred to the written report and noted preparations for lanternfly season by purchasing six cases of tree bands, which will be installed in the near future. Ms. Thompson requested the mechanic's report to include the in-house parts and labor savings to be added to these monthly reports.

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

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Burkholder referred to the written report and noted the arrival of grant funded turnout gear washer and dryer. It was suggested to auction the old commercial washer and dryer, and Council agreed. Chief Burkholder is hopeful that remaining grant funds are available to purchase a washer and dryer to launder linens and towels separately from the turnout gear.

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

- c. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Ratcliffe noted the following:
- Clean out of the new office has been completed and plans are under way to move into this office within a few weeks.
 - The parking kiosk is scheduled to arrive at the end of the month, and signage plans are moving forward. Mr. Imbesi noted the delay in implementing a new program was a result of a large order placed by the City of Chicago, delaying the delivery of the Borough's order.
 - A Planning Grant has been awarded by the DCED; the Board is currently fine-tuning the request for proposal (RFP). The Borough of Wyomissing is currently working on a similar plan and requested Mr. Ratcliffe to join them during the interview process in hopes of aligning firm choices to achieve common goals.

Andrew Moletress noted his absence to the December 18, 2018 Council meeting where Ms. Thompson read a statement regarding her concern, in part, of unrestricted funds allocated by the Borough and the inaccuracy of this statement. Mr. Moletress reported there are no unrestricted funds made available to West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF) and the amount budgeted for 2019 totals \$63,600, approximately \$18,000 less than what was budgeted for 2018. Ms. Thompson expressed concerns regarding matching grant funds; Mr. Wert stated the recently awarded Planning grant contract does not require matching funds. Mr. Moletress noted a number of WRCRF assistances provided to the Borough, such as the purchase of barricades, grant writing for projects such as Paint the Town and the 6th Avenue Streetscape project, as well as the time expended to implement a new parking program.

Mr. Imbesi noted his appreciation of all the work WRCRF does for the community and the tremendous improvements realized since implementing this revitalization program.

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

Mark Ratcliffe departed the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

13. COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer referred to the written report and noted an action item to approve the complete list of rehire/hiring of seasonal staff.

Motion to approve the list of 2019 Recreation Seasonal Staffing. **Moved** by Mr. Gardecki and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert noted additional zoning change discussions, such as moving zoning district lines and the continued review of amendments to the Rental Property Ordinance.

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

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – Monthly review of the list of vacant commercial properties was discussed, and a number of new businesses are planning to open in the near future, such as the old A-Z building and the Beer Wall. Mr. Wert also noted the newly constructed townhouses have been listed on the market at a value of \$224,900.

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

- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Wert noted a guest speaker from the Reading for 100 Group who shared her initiative to lead central Pennsylvania towards a clean energy movement. Also, Mr. Wert noted two cleanup events planned in April due to the late Easter holiday and the Craft Pretzel and Beer Festival. The Community Garden cleanup is scheduled on Sunday, April 14th to allow planting during an optimal timeframe and the Earth Day Cleanup that is scheduled on Sunday, April 28th.

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

- e. **Traffic & Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Lincoln stated the over budgeted funds for the 5th Avenue and Museum Road paving project are being discussed for use towards additional paving projects this year.

Mr. Wert inquired as to the temporary loading zone request, Mr. Lincoln noted further review is needed prior to making a recommendation to Council.

Motion to approve the Traffic & Infrastructure report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Amato. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – The March Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled due to weather.

- g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray referred to the minutes and there were no further comments.

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

- h. **Finance Committee** – Mr. Imbesi stated the minutes have not yet been prepared and noted the following:

- Committee members reviewed the draft DCED Borough audit and the Tax Collector audit.
- The survey of financial condition revealed one deficiency, which was the revenue to debt ratio that is currently 12.1%, the recommended ratio is below 10%. This deficiency is due

in part to the number of bonds held by the Borough. One of these bonds will be paid by the end of the year, leaving two remaining bonds.

- The revenue and expenses in comparison to budget information is being reviewed to implement a plan for the 2020 budgeting season.

14. TREASURER'S REPORT:

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 2/28/19** – Mr. Wert noted strong interest earnings for the year-to-date and thanked the Finance Committee for their hard work identifying investment avenues.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 2/28/19. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Payment Approval Report 2/20/19 to 3/14/19 & 3/15/19 to 3/19/19** – There were no comments on the payment approval reports.

Motion to approve Payment Approval report 2/20/19 to 3/14/19 & 3/15/19 to 3/19/19. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

15. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mark Woodward requested Council's consideration to close South 6th Avenue again from Penn Avenue to Franklin Street for the French Fry Festival on Saturday, August 10, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Motion to approve the closure of South 6th Avenue from Penn Avenue to Franklin Street on Saturday, August 10, 2019 for the West Reading Tavern's French Fry Festival. **Moved** by Mr. Amato and seconded by Mr. Gardecki. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Woodward also requested permission to host the Pumpkin Festival on October 19 and 20, 2019 and the Ice and Spice Festival on January 25 and 26, 2020, however both of these events do not require street closures. Mr. Imbesi stated events that do not require street closures would not require Council's permission, however special event applications are required to notify all departments of the event. Mr. Woodward requested a list of anticipated expenses for these events prior to the events to avoid surprises.

Mr. Moletress requested the Shade Tree Commission to consider trimming the low tree branches along the sidewalk area on Yarnell Street.

Grace Craze noted a broken branch that is suspended above the parking lot in the vicinity of the 200 block of Spruce Street.

16. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Amato and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager