

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

June 18, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Patrick Kaag; Council Members Denise Drobnick, Zachary Shaver, Zanna Leiendecker, and Bethany Bower; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker, Code Department Manager Chad Moyer; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Engineer Pamela Stevens; Main Street Executive Director Nick Price; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident	Karen Livingood, Resident
Lance Parmer, Fire Police (via Zoom)	Suzanne Thompson, Resident
Tina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner	Jean Witmer, Resident
Charles Aden, Resident	Dean Murray, Visitor (via Zoom)
Randall Miller, Visitor	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss personnel matters regarding the Borough Manager position and potential litigation pertaining to a liquor license transfer and the Lofts at Narrow.

3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** There were no amendments to the agenda.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers noted that the Code Department initiated the inclusion of a Berkheimer Tax Innovations Business Privilege Tax form with the annual rental occupancy renewal documents and asked how the existing 130 businesses throughout the borough receive this form to ensure that all taxes are being paid. Mr. Moyer reported that new businesses are provided the mercantile form but there is no mechanism in place to provide a notice to existing businesses.

Mr. Rogers requested an update on the transfer of a liquor license for the Third & Spruce Draffhaus. Mr. Lineaweaver noted a recent meeting with the current owner and the person requesting the license to negotiate terms.

Ms. Witmer inquired as to maintenance of the vegetative growth on an Oak Terrace residence. Mr. Moyer indicated that the Code Department is communicating with family members to address the situation, should that fall through the borough will contract with a landscaper to remediate the violation.

Mr. Aden recognized Mr. Lineaweaver as the recipient of an award from the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) as the Council Person of the Year and presented him with a Citation from State Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz's office. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that Mr. Murray joined the meeting tonight via Zoom because he submitted the nomination to the PSAB.

5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the May 21, 2024 meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance – Time Limit & Special Purpose Parking Amendments** – Mr. Lineaweaver recapped the approval last month of experimental regulations to allow time for feedback prior to adoption. To stay within the 90-day timeframe of experimental regulations an authorization to advertise an ordinance amendment was requested noting the ability to modify the amendment prior to adoption.

Motion to authorize the advertisement of 20-minute parking spaces along Penn Avenue, 3-hour parking, additional accessible parking spaces, and bus stop designation along the 300 block of South Seventh Avenue, and an accessible parking space on North Sixth Avenue, and 3-hour parking on South Third Avenue from Penn Avenue to Court Street. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Resolution 2024-15 Extension of Local Disaster Emergency** – Consideration was requested to extend the local disaster emergency.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2024-15 extending the Proclamation of Local Disaster Emergency until the July 16, 2024 Borough Council meeting. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Resolution 2024-16 Public Records Request Policy** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted recommendations from the Office of Open Records and PSAB to adopt a policy that would prohibit verbal or anonymous requests for public records.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2024-16 Public Records Request Policy to adopt a revised policy to facilitate requests for public records that would include the ability to refuse verbal or anonymous requests and identify records sought with sufficient specificity to ascertain which records are being requested. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 7-0.**

7. **CONSULTANT'S REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker indicated that he had nothing new to report that is not otherwise covered on the agenda.

- b. **Engineer's Report** – Ms. Stevens reviewed the following items:

- The 2024 Road Project is going well, we should expect an application for payment next month.
- The Green Light-Go year 8 grant application reimbursements are being coordinated with staff.
- The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Financing Authority (CFA) Penn Avenue and Borough Hall security camera upgrade grant project has been completed. Berkshire Systems Group Inc. submitted a payment application in the amount of \$269,990 which represents the contract amount of \$284,200, less 5% retainage.

Motion to authorize payment in the amount of \$269,990 of grant funds to Berkshire Systems Group, Inc. for their work performed to date for the Security Camera Upgrade Project.

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

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

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

Mr. Lineaweaver noted attendance of the PSAB Conference two weeks ago where he accepted an award for Outstanding Council Person of the Year. He is very appreciative and humbled by the award. Mr. Lineaweaver shared that a number of Certified Borough Official designations have been achieved this year by Denise Drobnick, Chad Moyer and Helen Moyer.

Regarding selection of the next Borough Manager, Mr. Lineaweaver introduced Randall Miller who was seated in the audience. Mr. Miller introduced himself noting that he lives in the Mount Penn area where he served as an elected Councilman for 12-years. His background is in borough management for Birdsboro and currently Orwigsburg. He also served for 11 years as a township administrator in a second-class township. His degree is in organizational management from Eastern University. Mr. Lineaweaver indicated that Mr. Miller was the most qualified candidate with 21 years of experience. Mr. Miller will be dividing his time between Orwigsburg and West Reading during the next two months with a start date in West Reading of June 24, 2024.

Motion to accept the Council President's report. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

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

- a. **Environmental Advisory Council Resignation** – Mrs. Madeira requested consideration of accepting a letter of resignation.

Motion to accept a letter of resignation from Ty Gardner from the Environmental Advisory Council. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Kaag apologized for her recent absence, noting health, work and family issues. However, she has been working in the background, sharing her attendance to the PSAB Conference and involvement with the Plein Air event. Mayor Kaag congratulated Denise Drobnick, Chad Moyer and Helen Moyer, who was not in attendance of the meeting, for achieving the designation of Certified Borough Official.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Stevens departed the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

11. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – In the absence of Chief Tornielli the Mayor offered to answer any questions. She noted a well-attended, well-run Art on the Avenue event that was held last weekend.

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions regarding his report and noted the completion of two sidewalk panel replacement projects last week at 309 Summit Street and 301 Reading Avenue. There are three areas planned to be addressed next week at 127, 200 and 209 Kent Way.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his report and noted a 21-year-old HVAC unit that needed to be replaced this past month at a cost of roughly \$10,000. A smaller unit has been installed and is functioning well.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his report and shared that demolition of the structure located at Second and Penn Avenues began today. Dust has been minimal thus far but will continue to be monitored. Partial Penn Avenue lane restrictions or closures may be necessary during this three-week project. The rear of the structure will be demolished this week with plans to demolish the front of the building next week. Sorting through and separating the debris is the most time-consuming task.

Mr. Moyer noted UGI Utilities, Inc. plans to replace a gas main in the vicinity of Second and Penn Avenues beginning the first week of July. Following completion of the demolition project and installation of a new gas main consideration will be given to reopening Second Avenue.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Price offered to answer any questions regarding his report and reported that the four vinyl traffic box covers have been installed on Penn Avenue. These decorative covers have spurred a positive spin on social media avenues. Mr. Price thanked everyone for their part in the smooth-running Art on the Avenue event. Data from the county should be received later this week as to the number of attendees and high-volume timeframes to assist in future planning.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Price departed the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

12. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Diversity Equity & Inclusion Taskforce** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted that a meeting was not held this month and noted the Pride Flag Raising Ceremony that was held at Borough Hall on Friday, May 31, 2024.
- b. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted that the Recreation Commission meeting had been cancelled this month. Mr. Esterly was unable to attend the meeting tonight because he was

needed at the pool to keep the facilities open during the heat wave. The following action items were reviewed:

- Approval was requested for a list of seasonal pool and playground staff hires. Mr. Lineaweaver shared three lifeguards ranging from \$10.25 to \$11.50 per hour, one concession and two playground leaders at \$10 per hour.

Motion to approve the list of pool and playground seasonal staff hires as presented. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- A rate increase of \$15 per hour was requested for the Concession Stand Manager who holds a ServSafe Certification. Mr. Grassley indicated that the pool and concession stand is busier than it has been in years.

Motion to approve a rate increase for the Concession Stand Manager to \$15 per hour. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- A rate increase for the Assistant Concession Stand Manager was also requested.

Motion to approve a rate increase for the Assistant Concession Stand Manager to \$13 per hour. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Drobnick shared receipt of a number of positive comments on the pool, staff, and director. The Playground Program appears to have a happy group of children as witnessed during the basketball clinic she attended last week. The commission did not meet this month, but Ms. Bower was thanked for organizing a great concert in the park event. A reminder was shared of yoga in the park on Friday and Saturday mornings. The bike riding schedule is being revamped now that the heat has arrived. There are tentative plans to meet at least once a month on a Wednesday evening.

Motion to accept the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert spoke of a continued review this month without representatives of Derck & Edson to discuss zoning amendments to create form-based code regulations. Derck & Edson representatives plan to attend the July meeting for further discussions. Secondly, the commission discussed R.M. Palmer's plans to demolish Building #5 located at 100-118 Franklin Street and the soil test results that revealed lead, mercury, and arsenic contaminants. A joint meeting will be scheduled to discuss plans to remediate the contamination of the soil to avoid limiting the future use of these parcels. It was noted that demolition of the building is expected to cost over two-million dollars to address issues such as asbestos, lead, and creosote.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Economic Development Committee** – The June Economic Development Committee meeting was cancelled.

- e. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Kaag noted a workshop that was held a few days ago at the new Community Garden location with the Public Works Director to determine the layout of the garden to relocate the shed.
 - f. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – The June Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting was cancelled.
 - g. **Shade Tree Commission** – The June Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
 - h. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Grassley noted review of a training video on asbestos.
Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 7-0.**
 - i. **Finance Committee** – The June Finance Committee meeting was cancelled.
13. **TREASURER’S REPORT:**
- a. **Financial Statement Ending 5/31/2024** – There were no questions or comments.
 - b. **Payment Approval Report 5/22/24 to 6/14/24, and 6/15/24 to 6/18/24** – There were no questions or comments.
Motion to approve the financial statement ending 5/31/2024, and Payment Approval Reports of 5/22/24 through 6/18/24. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 7-0.**
14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
Mr. Rogers did not perceive parking to be an issue during the Art on the Avenue event but shared that a number of cars were parked on the grass in the 700 block of Reading Avenue.
15. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary