

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

**September 24, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held its second monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, September 24, 2024 with the following persons present: Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Patrick Kaag; Council Members Denise Drobnick, Zachary Shaver, Zanna Leiendecker, and Bethany Bower; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; Borough Manager Randall P. Miller; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council President Ryan Lineaweaver was unable to attend.

**VISITORS:** Karen Livingood, Resident James Rogers, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council Vice President Philip Wert called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** There were no amendments to the agenda.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**  
Mr. Rogers provided an update to his Business Privilege Tax review efforts noting that last month there were 186 accounts that were delinquent, as of today there are 175 delinquent accounts. Mr. Rogers indicated that people did find places to park during the Fall Fest event. He is hopeful that the local businesses sold a lot of products to contribute towards the Business Privilege Tax revenues.
4. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:**  
Mr. Miller reviewed the following items:
  - a. **Special Event Permit West Reading Tavern** – Mr. Miller requested consideration to approve the Ice & Spice event hosted by West Reading Tavern that has been reviewed and recommended approval by the Special Event Committee.  
  
Motion to approve a special event permit to West Reading Tavern for their Ice & Spice event scheduled January 24, 2025 to January 26, 2025. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**
  - b. **Special Event Permit Wyomissing Homecoming Parade** – Mr. Miller noted receipt of a special event application for the annual parade and bonfire event planned on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Due to the late submittal of this request, the Special Event Committee has not met to discuss, however because this is an annual event, signed approval has been granted by all except the Mayor and Police Chief to date. Mayor Kaag agreed to grant approval.  
  
Motion to approve a special event permit to the Wyomissing Homecoming Parade and Bonfire event to be held on October 4, 2024. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**
  - c. **Animal Services Contract** – Renewal of a contract with Safety Net Sanctuary was discussed at length with regards to cost and actual services provided. Safety Net Sanctuary has increased their fee to a \$1.50 per capita basis, increasing the annual cost by \$1,500. The proposed contract does not list the owner as an Animal Control Officer, and it was noted

that the owner refused to enter private property this summer following the report of a dog outdoors during a Code Red designated timeframe. A summarization of services provided to the borough for the first six months were four dog calls, all returned to their owners except one that was still in their care. This organization does not handle cats which is the larger issue within the borough. It was thought to be ideal if a multi-municipal type of program could be established with neighboring municipalities to be proactive on aspects such as control of the stray/feral cat population. It was decided to explore options and to table action at this time.

- d. **Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) Conditional Licensing Agreement (CLA)** – Mr. Miller stated that the PLCB has approved a conditional licensing agreement for the 3<sup>rd</sup> & Spruce establishment. Following the borough solicitor’s review of the agreement it was recommended to reaffirm the withdraw of the borough’s objections to the transfer of liquor license. The agreement defines a majority of the borough’s request to impose additional conditions on the license and the premises.

Motion to approve the PLCB revisions to the CLA and to reaffirm the withdraw of the borough’s objections to the transfer of liquor license for use at 238 South Third Avenue, West Reading, PA. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **Parking Enforcement Officer Position** – The Personnel Committee interviewed candidates earlier today and requests consideration to provide a conditional offer of employment.

Motion to provide a conditional offer of employment to fill the Parking Enforcement Officer position. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Borough Manager’s report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

5. **BUDGET DISCUSSIONS:**

a. **Recreation Department**

Mr. Esterly shared progress on the installation of grant funded security cameras in the park.

**90-367-105 Bicentennial House Rentals** – Due in part to renovations completed by the Public Works Department, year to date revenues have exceeded the 2024 budget of \$13,000 and are anticipated to end the year at \$16,000. The proposed 2025 budget was \$16,000. Renovations are planned for the kitchen and bathrooms during the upcoming winter season.

**90-367-155 Pavilion Rentals** – Revenues are \$2,000 less than what had been budgeted. Improvements such as creating a bathroom on the upper level was recommended by Mr. Grassley.

**90-367-200 Pool Receipts** – A year end estimate of \$114,800 exceeds the 2024 budgeted amount of \$92,000.

**90-367-203 Spectator Fees** – Mr. Esterly recommended the removal of this feature that is difficult to track and often abused. The amount of revenue generated was \$850. This feature was recommended to be removed from the fee schedule that is generally adopted in January.

**90-367-300 Playground Registration Fees** – The half-day program registration fee was lowered from \$400 to \$250 per child, thereby lowering revenues even with an increase in

registered children. Mr. Esterly recommended increasing this fee slightly each year. Expenses associated with wages and field trip travel expenses were under budget.

**90-367-400 Pool Concessions** – Revenues exceeded the budget; however, Mr. Esterly intends to increase pricing in the coming year to combat increased product costs while remaining competitive with neighboring pool concessions.

**90-367-813 Fishing Rodeo** – Revenues were lower than the budget. Additional advertising through A-Frame type signs is planned next year to increase awareness and attendance.

**90-367-817 Concerts in the Park** – Mr. Esterly indicated that a grant opportunity exists to offset expenses associated with music.

**90-367-816 Karaoke Contests** – Ms. Drobnick suggested lowering the year end estimated revenues until a new location can be established to host these events.

**90-380-100 Miscellaneous Recreation Revenues** – Mr. Esterly stated that lost disc golf disc sales have generated roughly \$600 this year.

**90-387-201 Pool Chair Storage** – Mr. Esterly noted six individuals that took advantage of the new pool chair storage program and believes that additional interest may be shown next year.

**90-387-304 Playground Field Trips** – Revenues totaling \$3,300 were lower than the \$7,800 budget. The proposed 2025 budget was \$4,000.

**90-452-181 Pool Wages** – Expenses totaling \$63,162 were lower than the \$78,000 that had been budgeted.

**90-452-321 Concession Supplies** – Expenses exceeded the budget by roughly \$3,000.

**90-452-531 Pool Chemicals** – Mr. Grassley is negotiating costs by reducing the number of deliveries with an increased tank capacity.

**90-392-001 Transfer from General Fund** – Mrs. Rentschler shared that the transfer from General Fund year end estimate of \$116,000 is less than the budgeted amount of \$123,200.

Mr. Esterly spoke of plans to host a pool member appreciation day with a moonlight swim and raffle items to encourage additional memberships. Mr. Wert recommended reviewing the need to register for a small games of chance license through the Treasurer's office.

Mr. Esterly departed the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

b. **Public Works Department / Water / Sewer / Trash**

Mr. Grassley reviewed the following budget items:

**01-391-430 Sale of Public Works Vehicle** – Mr. Grassley inquired as to thoughts on retaining truck #52 as a backup vehicle for plowing as opposed to selling the vehicle to generate the budgeted \$15,000 in revenue. The fuel injection system was replaced that cost \$400 in parts and roughly 70 mechanic hours. Otherwise, the 2003 diesel aluminum body truck with 30,000 miles is in good condition. Council agreed to retain the vehicle as a backup for plowing.

**01-409-374 Police Building Maintenance and Repairs** – Mr. Grassley stated that two years ago these expenses were divided into each building for better tracking of expenses. This year a new zoned air conditioning and heating system is being installed for the police department. He plans to retain the projected expenses each year to make improvements to all buildings.

**01-409-373 Borough Hall Maintenance and Repairs** – Mr. Grassley plans to replace windows in-house next year to avoid the \$1,000 installation fee per window. An air conditioning unit was replaced this year.

**01-430-172 Overtime** – Due to numerous water main breaks this expense is projected to end the year \$10,000 over budget.

**01-430-173 Part-Time Help** – The projected year end estimate is roughly \$11,000 below budget.

**01-430-336 Vehicle Replacements** – Mr. Grassley noted grant funding for a tri-axle truck that has been ordered and on a waiting list for two-years. Grant matching funds would be divided between water, sewer, and trash.

**01-430-337 Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs** – Computer program expenses and division of parts and materials with the police department was projected to remain at \$30,000.

**01-433-246 Line Painting** – Due to increased paint costs this expense was raised \$500.

**01-455-376 Tree Trimming** – An increase of \$10,000 was requested for next year to be able to divide the borough into four or five sections to maintain trees every five years. Additional trimming is planned this year.

**01-455-378 Tree Plantings** – Last year expenses were higher due to not planting the year prior. A budget of \$3,000 was projected each year moving forward.

Mr. Grassley recommended budgeting roughly \$450,000 for a Sixth Avenue water main replacement project that the engineer is applying for grant funding. The project scope is from Penn Avenue to Franklin Street, though Mr. Grassley is hoping that the Public Works Department could perform tasks in-house to potentially extend the scope of work from Penn Avenue to Chestnut Street.

A notification has been received from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as to the sewage pump station pumps exceeding their pumping capacity. A review is needed with the borough engineer to determine possible reporting errors. Mr. Grassley recommended the purchase of backup pumps for each pump station to allow installation while the pump(s) are out for repair.

**30-430-000 Highways Capital Expense** – A review of 2025 road projects has not yet been completed. Mr. Grassley requested to retain the amount budgeted for this year to continue to improve multiple roadways each year.

6. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Budget Meeting Schedule** – Mrs. Rentschler recommended cancelling the Saturday, October 5, 2024 budget meeting to allow time to prepare a full budget with descriptions for review. The

recommended budget meeting schedule was to meet on Tuesday, October 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. to review the full budget and to propose the budget for public inspection for a period of ten days. If unable to propose the budget on this date, meet again on Saturday, November 2, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. to review and propose the budget for a period of ten days. This would allow the authorization to advertise the proposed budget during the regular November 19, 2024 Council meeting. Should additional time be needed we could meet again on November 26, 2027 at 7:00 p.m. for authorization to advertise in order to adopt the budget during the regular December 17, 2024 meeting as opposed to meeting again on December 23, 2024.

- b. **Administration Expenses** – Mrs. Rentschler provided clarification on the revised 2024-year end estimate of \$89,000 and projected 2025 budget of \$95,000 for Administration Health and Accident Insurance expenses.
- c. **Police Holiday Pay Expenses** – Mrs. Rentschler provided clarification on the revised 2024-year end estimate of \$120,000 and projected 2025 budget of \$145,500 for police holiday pay expenses.
- d. **Liability Insurance** – Mrs. Rentschler shared a worst-case scenario provided by Tompkins Insurance of a 15% increase in liability insurance fees in 2025. Actual quotes will be provided in a few weeks.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers noted that striping of intersections along Penn Avenue have not yet been completed, there are no stop bars. Mr. Grassley will contact the contractor to determine their schedule tomorrow.

8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary