

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

July 15, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, July 15, 2025 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Patrick Kaag; Council Members Denise Drobnick and Zanna Leiendecker; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Junior Council Person Brian Pascal; Solicitor Daniel Becker, Code Department Manager & Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Engineer Pamela Stevens; Borough Manager Randall Miller; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Members Zachary Shaver and Bethany Bower were unable to attend.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident

Christina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner

Suzanne Thompson, Resident

Karen Livingood, Resident

Anthony Verrecchio, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** An executive session was held at 6:30 p.m. this evening to discuss personnel and potential litigation.

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

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Verrecchio shared his frustration with the excessive noise emanating from the Italian-American Club located across the street from his home on Chestnut Street, as well as concerns about three vehicle hit and run incidents within a two-week period. Mr. Wert recommended that he and his neighbors file complaints with the Police Department each time their residential neighborhood experiences issues. Mr. Moyer recommended also reporting incidents to the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) hotline at 1-800-932-0602. Mr. Lineaweaver indicated that this establishment is working under a conditional license granted by the PLCB. Mayor Kaag met with Mr. Verrecchio in the hall to discuss the particulars of reporting nuisances.

Mr. Verrecchio departed the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Rogers spoke of overflowing trash receptacles along Penn Avenue in the vicinity of the Farmers' Market, especially during the Fourth of July weekend. Mr. Grassley will ensure these receptacles are emptied following these events. He also spoke of information gathered from a right-to-know request for the recent Art on the Avenue event and expressed concern about five crew members working fifteen hours and the importance of having a break. Mr. Grassley reported that various 20-minute breaks are observed during that timeframe.

5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve June 17, 2025, regular meeting minutes. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

6. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Resolution 2025-17 Municipal Facilities Meeting Room Policy** – Following requests for use of the Council Meeting Room a policy has been drafted congruent with other rented municipal facilities.

Motion to approve the Municipal Facilities Meeting Room Use Policy. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **Resolution 2025-18 Authorizing Sale of Municipally Owned Property** – The four police department vehicles netted \$10,455 in a public auction held on Municibid.

Motion to authorize the sale and transfer of four police department vehicles to the respective highest bidders. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- c. **Resolution 2025-19 Fifth Avenue and Pine Street Rapid Flashing Beacon Grant** – Authorization was requested to designate officials to execute all grant documents and agreements associated with a pedestrian crossing improvement grant funding request.

Motion to designate the Council President and Borough Secretary as signatories of all documents and agreements between the borough and Commonwealth Financing Authority in obtaining the requested rapid flashing beacon pedestrian crossing improvement grant funding. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- d. **Resolution 2025-20 Trail and Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Grant** – Authorization was requested to designate officials to execute all grant documents and agreements associated with bridge replacement grant funding request.

Motion to designate the Council President and Borough Secretary as signatories of all documents and agreements between the borough and Commonwealth Financing Authority in obtaining the requested trail and pedestrian bridge replacements grant funding. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- e. **Ordinance – Appointing a Deputy Tax Collector** – Mr. Lineaweaver requested a moment of silence in remembrance of Deputy Tax Collector Janice Kaucher who passed away earlier this week. An ordinance was proposed to appoint Cynthia Madeira as Deputy Tax Collector.

Motion to authorize the advertisement for an ordinance appointing a Deputy Tax Collector. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Resolution 2025-21 Authorization to Sign Tax Collector Documents – Authorization was requested to allow the appointed Deputy Tax Collector to sign documents.

Motion to authorize the appointed Deputy Tax Collector to sign documents requiring the signature of the tax collector. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

7. **CONSULTANTS' 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 inquired with Mr. Becker as to the Fifth Avenue and Pine Street pedestrian improvement letter of support action item under the manager's report that

did not include the grant funding match. It was thought unnecessary to amend the agenda to revise the action item. Ms. Stevens reviewed the following items:

- **DCED Green Light-Go Year 8 Grant** – Change Order No. 2 was requested for unforeseen underground work at Fifth Avenue and Franklin and Chestnut Streets and Museum Road and Sycamore Road traffic signals in the amount of \$15,884.75. Change Order No. 3 was requested as credit in the amount of \$2,300 due to a change in work to repair the conduit at the hospital signal in Change Order No. 1. The revised project construction cost would be \$202,484.75, which is still under the grant amount of \$209,975.00.

Motion to accept Change Order No. 2 increase of \$15,884.75 for the Green Light-Go Year 8 project to adjust the routing of cables at the Museum Road and Sycamore Road traffic signal, and replacement of existing cables at the Fifth Avenue Chestnut Street and Franklin Street traffic signals. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick.
Motion carried 5-0.

Motion to accept Change Order No. 3 deduct of \$2,300 for credit due to change in work to repair conduit at the Fifth Avenue and Museum Road traffic signal. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Payment Application No. 3 from Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. was received in the amount of \$18,466.20. The remaining contract, including retainage is \$20,248.49.

Motion to approve Payment Application No. 3 for the Green Light-Go Year 8 traffic signal upgrades in the amount of \$18,466.20. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- **MORE Grant Level 2 Energy Audit** – An energy audit had been performed on July 10, 2025 at Borough Hall, Fire Department and Bicentennial House buildings.
- **2025 Road Projects** – Ann Street and Spruce Street paving is scheduled to take place July 28th to the 30th, weather permitting.
- **Pump Station Flow Monitoring** – There are no flow issues to report. The Department of Environmental Protection letter dated July 8, 2025, acknowledged the anomalies that occurred in the 2024 Chapter 94 Report.
- **Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge Painting** – Ms. Stevens is working with Mr. Miller in preparing a bid package for painting the railroad bridge over Penn Avenue. Ms. Stevens will research requirements and regulations and prepare a proposal for the preparation of the bid package. Mr. Miller noted communication with a contractor that would paint the bridge. Options such as painting or application of vinyl lettering are being researched. Fees associated with permitting and train watchman will be the responsibility of the borough. Fee for traffic safety would be the contractor's responsibility.
- **2024 Paving Projects** – Ms. Stevens reminded Mr. Grassley of the maintenance period that will end on July 17th should there be any issues to report to the contractor.

Motion to accept the Engineer's report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

Mr. Lineaweaver had nothing new to report at this time.

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

Mr. Miller reviewed the following:

- **Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency** – This program would aid residents that are having difficulty paying their water bills. The borough would need to be an approved vendor to participate. There is no cost to the borough to participate in this program.

Motion to register as a vendor in the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency Homeowner Assistance Fund to determine amounts of outstanding utility arrearages as requested by the Program Administrator. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- **Fifth Avenue and Pine Street Pedestrian Crossing Upgrade Grant** – A letter of support has been drafted to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to improve the pedestrian crossing on Fifth Avenue at Pine Street. The amount requested is \$132,048 with a borough committed match of funds totaling \$56,591. The total project cost is \$188,639.

Motion to provide a letter of support, including matching fund commitment, to the DCED to install a Rapid Flashing Beacon at the Fifth Avenue and Pine Street pedestrian crossing. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- **Playground Drive Curb Sidewalk and ADA Ramp Project Grant** – Consideration was requested to provide a letter of support to DCED. Modifications to the letter were needed regarding the amount of funding requested and grant application identification number.

Motion to provide a revised letter of support to DCED for grant funds totaling \$543,182 to be used for Playground Drive curb, sidewalk, and ADA ramp replacement. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- **Pedestrian and Trail Bridge Replacement Grant** – Consideration was requested to provide a letter of support to DCED to replace two pedestrian bridges in the park area totaling \$738,788.

Motion to provide a letter of support to DCED for the parkland pedestrian and trail bridge replacement grant application in the amount of \$738,788. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mr. Miller shared news of confirmation from WalkWorks that the borough has been awarded a transportation planning grant to improve the walkability of the borough. An onboarding meeting is scheduled for later this week.

Motion to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Kaag referred to her report and noted that National Night Out will take place on Tuesday, August 5th from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Two new police officers have graduated from the police academy and were sworn in to begin active duty. They are scheduled to attend the August Council meeting to formally introduce themselves.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

11. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – In Chief Tornielli's absence Mayor Kaag noted that there were no incidents during the Art on the Avenue or Wine Walk events.

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley referred to his written report and offered to answer any questions. Repaving the parking lot at 433 Penn Avenue was discussed. A single proposal was received from Ronnie Folk Paving, Inc., a second proposal will be arriving soon from H&K Group. It was thought that it may be possible to add this project to the H&K Group 2025 paving project if this project does not exceed 25% of their 2025 contract with the borough. It was decided to table the action item to award a contract until a proposal is received from H&K Group. The ongoing trash issue in the vicinity of the fishing dock had been discussed with Cumru Township, Berks County and PennDOT for possible improvements to the area. Mr. Grassley noted that Public Works removes debris twice per week by backhoe from the area.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and offered to answer any questions. He noted the relief audit finding of inadequate signatory authority for the disbursement of funds. This pertained to a few checks that did not have the two required signatures. There were no issues with the purchases, and all expenditure of funds were authorized.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Ms. Stevens departed the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his report and noted that 421 Penn Avenue closed their business on July 5, 2025, it is unclear as to what their plans are moving forward. A representative of Metronet Fiber has expressed an interest in installing fiberoptic internet in the borough and scheduled a meeting to discuss permitting. It was noted that FastBridge Fiber has not begun work in the borough.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – In the absence of Mr. Price, Mr. Lineaweaver provided highlights from his report:

- The estimated number of people that attended the Art on the Avenue event was down slightly to 19,500, which may have been caused by extreme weather temperatures.
- The pole banner flags received were the wrong size, these will be reprinted.
- The promotions and marketing committee are working on Restaurant week and Indie week that will take place later this fall.
- Final planning and discussions are taking place with local colleges for a college night in the fall semester.
- A teacher's tour will take place in early August with the Berks Business Education Coalition.
- He attended a ribbon cutting ceremony at Chef David's.

Mr. Grassley reported that they began installing the new streetlights today in the 700 block of Penn Avenue and will move to the 500 and 600 blocks tomorrow.

Consideration was requested to use 433 Penn Avenue and the adjacent block of Tulpehocken Avenue during the 2nd Friday event in August. It was unclear whether the parking lot would be paved prior to this date.

Motion to approve the use of 433 Penn Avenue lot and adjacent block of Tulpehocken Avenue between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. during the 2nd Friday event of August 8, 2025. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Consideration was requested of closing South Sixth Avenue between Penn Avenue and Cherry Street from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. during the 2nd Friday event of August 8, 2025. Mr. Miller noted that he has been meeting with Mr. Price on a weekly basis to avoid last-minute requests for road closures. He noted that Borough Council approved the concept at the beginning of the year to close South Sixth Avenue, however, last month there were additional last-minute road closure requests that caused Mayor Kaag to make decisions in short-order. Mayor Kaag shared her request of road closure requests in a timelier manner and stated that Borough Council can approve road closures and recognizes that the closing of streets does come to the Mayor. It was hoped that the monthly special event committee meetings would limit these types of last-minute requests. Mr. Becker stated that the Borough Code provides the authority to close roadways to Borough Council, however, the Mayor has the authority to close roadways in emergency situations. It was noted that this authority can be delegated to the Mayor. The Mayor was concerned with multiple road closures in a small vicinity and the need to plan for additional police staffing. There are a number of safety issues in the closure of North Sixth Avenue. It was decided to table this action item to allow the Special Event Committee to meet and discuss options on the first Friday of the month, prior to this event.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 5-0.**

12. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – The July Recreation Commission meeting had been cancelled; however, Mr. Esterly spoke of a workshop that is scheduled to discuss improvements to the hayride and haunted house events. A request was made to hire an additional lifeguard to balance staffing schedules at the end of the season.

Motion to approve the hiring of a lifeguard at a rate of \$10.25 per hour. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mr. Esterly thanked Ms. Stevens for her assistance in applying for a grant to replace the trail and pedestrian bridges. An additional grant application is being pursued for improvements to the ballfield. Mr. Esterly thanked Mr. Kaag for DJing the 4th of July event at the pool, which had a great turnout.

Motion to accept the Recreation Director's report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – The July Planning Commission meeting was cancelled.
- c. **Economic Development Committee** – The July Economic Development Committee meeting was cancelled.
- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The June Environmental Advisory Council meeting was cancelled.
- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – The July Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting was cancelled.
- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – The July Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted review of a training video on lead exposure. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- h. **Finance Committee** – The July Finance Committee meeting was cancelled.

13. TREASURER'S REPORT:

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 6/30/2025** – There were no questions or comments.
- b. **Payment Approval Report 6/18/25 to 7/11/25 and 7/12/25 to 7/15/25** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 6/30/2025, and Payment Approval Reports of 6/18/25 through 7/15/25. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mrs. Livingood shared as a prior Recreation Commission member that the pool is a favorite place for her to be and expressed her appreciation for the wonderful staff that has a good rapport with Mr. Esterly. She commended Mr. Esterly for his efforts. Ms. Shenk also noted positive comments from her resident clients regarding the pool atmosphere this year.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary