

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

August 19, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, August 19, 2025 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Philip Wert; Council Pro-Tem Patrick Kaag; Council Members Denise Drobnick, Bethany Bower, and Zachary Shaver; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Junior Council Person Brian Pascal; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; 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 Member Zanna Leiendecker was unable to attend.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident	Christina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner
Suzanne Thompson, Resident	Karen Livingood, Resident
Anthony Verrecchio, Resident	Helen Moyer, Resident
Christine Spang, Resident	Dean Murray, Visitor
Charles Aden, Resident & State Representative	Constituent Services

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:** An executive session was held at 6:30 p.m. this evening to discuss both personnel and emergency preparedness.
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** There were no amendments to the agenda.
4. **INTRODUCTION OF POLICE OFFICERS:** Mr. Lineaweaver noted that one of the officers was unable to attend the meeting tonight, we will try again in September to introduce both new Police Officers.
5. **COMMENDATION:** Mr. Lineaweaver read aloud a commendation thanking Mr. Pascal for demonstrating exceptional civic commitment and dedication to public service throughout his tenure as Junior Council Person.
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
Mr. Rogers spoke of the French Fry Festival event last weekend that unexpectedly drew quite a crowd and recommended that additional trash cans be provided at future events. He questioned the decision not to enforce parking during this event, noting that it was a loss of revenue. Mr. Rogers shared a conversation he had with two residents in the Second Avenue and Franklin Street vicinity that made a recommendation to limit the twenty-minute parking space to business hours only, as well as removing the two-hour parking limit in the 000 block of South Second Avenue. He asked Council to implement these changes tonight. It was noted that this action is not included on the agenda this evening and that normal protocol is for the Traffic and Infrastructure to review and make a recommendation to Borough Council on any ordinance amendments.

Mr. Verrecchio provided an update on the excessive noise emanating from the Italian-American Club located across the street from his home on Chestnut Street noting that he called the Police

Department every Saturday night in the past month to report noise. He attempted to speak to the Liquor Control Board which has proved to be difficult. Chief Torielli spoke about his involvement with the Liquor Control Board and provided Mr. Verrecchio with a business card to discuss further at a later time.

Mr. Verrecchio departed the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

7. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the July 15, 2025, regular meeting minutes, and the special meeting minutes of July 25, 2025, and August 14, 2025. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Drobnick.

Motion carried 6-0.

8. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Resolution 2025-23 Pedestrian Bridge Replacements Grant** – Approval of signatories for all documents and agreements between the borough and Commonwealth Financing Authority for two pedestrian bridge replacements in the park area was requested.

Motion to designate the Council President and Borough Secretary as signatories of all grant funding documents associated with two pedestrian bridge replacements and trail improvements totaling \$738,788. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Resolution 2025-24 Junior Council Person Commendation**

Motion to acknowledge Brian Pascal for his exemplary service as Junior Council Person.

Moved by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

9. **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 reviewed the following items:

- **DCED Green Light-Go Year 9 Grant** – The traffic signal plans and forms for Seventh Avenue and Parkside Drive North, Seventh Avenue and Reading Avenue, and Reading and Eighth Avenue and Hill Road need to be signed by Council. The ADA requirements were separated from this project to its own project in year ten.

Motion to execute Green Light-Go Year 9 plans and forms that remove ADA improvements. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Ann Street and Spruce Street Paving** – A reimbursement request is in process from grant funding.
- **MORE Grant Level 2 Energy Audit** – A copy of the energy audit report was included in the report to Council. The Environmental Advisory Council was tasked with reviewing the report and making recommendations on solutions to pursue. The next phase of preliminary design would also be covered by grant funding.
- **2025 Road Projects** – The remaining paving projects are to begin on September 2nd, a request for nighttime paving will be discussed under the Public Works report.

Mr. Murray joined the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

- **Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge Painting** – Ms. Stevens provided a proposal to prepare a bid package for painting the railroad bridge over Penn Avenue. Mr. Miller noted that Norfolk Southern has not granted permission to proceed and may request engineering specifications. In hopes of the project being completed before winter, a request was made to approve the engineer’s proposal and the Costars contractor.

Motion to approve the engineer’s proposal to prepare and oversee the bidding process to paint the Norfolk Southern Bridge. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Engineer’s report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

10. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

Mr. Lineaweaver shared a request from the Pennsylvania State Association of Borough’s (PSAB) to sit on the 2026 PSAB Conference Committee.

Motion to accept the Council President’s report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

11. **BOROUGH MANAGER’S REPORT:**

Mr. Miller reviewed the following:

- **Winter Municipal Agreement** – A new winter maintenance services agreement has been received from PennDOT. Funding through Liquid Fuel funds is roughly \$100 less next year. A new addition to the agreement allows for severe winter payment adjustments as determined by PennDOT. It was noted that the funds provided by PennDOT generally do not cover expenses. However, the alternative is to wait for PennDOT to maintain Penn Avenue. Mr. Lineaweaver noted this is a five-year term that will automatically renew for five additional one-year periods unless either party terminates the agreement.

Motion to enter into an agreement with PennDOT for winter maintenance services. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Gateway Bridge Painting** – A proposal was received from Costars contractor CertaPro Painters in the amount of \$68,869 to prepare the bridge for painting, control of traffic, materials and either hand painting or applying thermoplastic letters. The timeline is dependent on Norfolk Southern’s approval.

Motion to enter into an agreement with CertaPro Painters to repaint the Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge over Penn Avenue. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Shade Tree Commission Resignation** – A letter of resignation was received from Patrick Kaag after seven years of service on the Shade Tree Commission.

Motion to accept a letter of resignation from Mr. Kaag from the Shade Tree Commission. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **2026 Real Estate Tax Collector** – Consideration was requested to appoint a property tax collector in 2026. At present there are no candidates running for election in November. Proposals were received from the County of Berks and Berkheimer. The County proposed a flat \$1,000 fee based on 1,520 tax bills and half of postage expenses incurred for the first year. Berkheimer proposed \$2.50 per bill and \$1.25 in postage with an annual 5% adjustment in fees.

Motion to appoint the County of Berks as the 2026 Real Estate Tax Collector in the absence of an elected Tax Collector. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Business Privilege Tax Collector (BPT)** – Mr. Miller noted the approaching automatic three-year renewal of an agreement with Berkheimer to collect BPT. There are no proposed rate increases or changes to this agreement. A proposal was provided by Berks Earned Income Tax Bureau that claims to have increased their efforts in the collection of delinquent taxes. An advantage of working with Berks EIT for the taxpayer would be having one entity to remit taxes too. There was hesitancy in making a change since we are not unhappy with Berkheimer services and a recommendation that if we decide to change to Berks EIT that an ironclad agreement be in place, and to inquire with their current clients for feedback. Mr. Lineaweaver noted an increase of 7% in delinquent collections by Berks EIT and Berkheimer being on target this year to increase delinquent tax collection by 40%. This topic was tabled until next month.
- **Active Transportation Planning Grant Award** – Mr. Miller requested acceptance of this award.

Motion to accept an Active Transportation Planning Grant Award. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Miller also requested authorization to sign documents as needed to accomplish goals within a ten-month period.

Motion to name the Borough Manager as the authorized signatory for the Active Transportation Plan, release request for proposals (RFP), and advertise for public participation on the steering committee. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Personnel Matter** – This topic was tabled.

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

Ms. Stevens departed the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

12. MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Kaag referred to her report and noted continued work on the five-year strategic plan and a new Community Connect Tent Series which is a mobile outreach program where officers set up around town for casual, face-to-face conversations with residents. Locations and times will be posted on social media and Crimewatch pages. The first initiative is planned for Thursday, August 28th from 6-8 p.m. at Linden Lane and Sycamore Road. Mayor Kaag attended the National Night

Out event, ribbon cutting ceremony at Haven L&S Studio during a 2nd Friday event, and the French Fry Festival. Ongoing priorities included preparation for fall cleanup event, continued interdepartmental coordination of event permitting and ongoing support of new public safety personnel.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick.
Motion carried 6-0.

13. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Tornielli noted that calls for service and officer-initiated activity numbers are up from last month, which includes 32 foot patrols, 14 directed patrols, and 146 business checks primarily along Penn Avenue. The first French Fry Festival along Penn Avenue was most concerning to him with regards to flow of traffic. He thanked the Fire Police and Public Works Department for their input and efforts to execute a plan that worked exceptionally well. There was a couple medical heat related emergencies during the event, and an incident of stealing from one of the tents. The Sheriff Deputies apprehended those individuals. The Community Connect Tent Series to meet residents where they are will continue throughout the borough. The Records Management System (RMS) upgrade has been delayed to November to allow full transfer of data to the new system. The grant funding deadline is the end of the year. Information Technology (IT) upgrades are ongoing to identify areas to improve efficiency, cyber security and cost savings.

Motion to accept the Police Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley noted that the tree inventory information is available online and the in-house removal of five dead trees that were identified in the inventory. Mr. Grassley has been working with the trash hauler to ensure that no fluids are leaking onto borough roadways. A request was made to perform paving activity during the overnight hours. Several areas would be affected by limited or no access such as Reading Avenue, Sacred Heart School, Wyomissing Elementary School and the Reading Hospital. Weather permitting, paving should begin on September 2nd and wrap up within seven days.

Motion to authorize the 2025 road paving projects to be performed during overnight hours. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Grassley requested appointment of two Council Members to meet with officials from Cumru Township, and the City of Reading, to discuss how best to handle the homeless and trash issues near the fishing dock.

Motion to appoint Ms. Bower and Ms. Drobnick to the Cumru Township, City of Reading, and West Reading partnership to address issues in the area of the fishing dock. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Grassley shared confusion about striping plans for the traffic circle. The contractor quoted to replace existing street markings. However, there had been a base bid and an alternate bid with and without parking amenities. A decision was made to implement the plan without parking amenities. A change order will be needed; Mr. Miller has estimated an increase of \$4,700. This action was tabled.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and estimated taking ownership of the replacement Utility-64 in September. Recently an HVAC air compressor unit needed replacement. This upgrade is in line with the energy audit recommendation to replace units that are more than twenty years old.

Motion to accept the Fire Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his report and noted that Union Pacific will be taking over Norfolk Southern rail lines in the near future. Hopefully the railroad bridge painting project can be completed before that change takes place.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- The Second Friday event was a success with a petting zoo, live music and mechanical bull.
- The Better Berks Business Education Coalition teacher tour allowed teachers to spend a day with a small business learning how businesses operate to relay information to their students.
- The French Fry Festival drew in over sixty-five vendors. Information as to the number of attendees should be available soon.
- Planning continues for Fall Fest and the road closure request has been forwarded to PennDOT.
- The Promotions and Marketing Committee is working on a new Local Love event which will take place on the third Thursday of the month geared towards retail with over twenty retail businesses participating.
- The planned college night with local representatives will be on Thursday, October 16th from 5-8 p.m. This is also a Local Love night and they anticipate the Avenue to be busy.
- Attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for Haven, a new hair salon on South Fifth Avenue.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

14. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly requested consideration of providing a letter of support to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for a Local Share Account (LSA) grant to replace two pedestrian bridges and trail rehabilitation in the park.

Motion to provide a letter of support to DCED for an LSA grant to replace pedestrian bridges and rehabilitate portions of the trail in the park. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Esterly and Ms. Drobnick attended the West Reading Summer Basketball Championship and presented a plaque to Berks Catholic. A Battle of Karaoke Stars event is planned on August 31st at Third and Spruce. The Pups at the Pool event is planned for September 1st. Plans are underway for the upcoming haunted house, and a third wagon is being sought for this year's event. Mr. Esterly reported that due to limited lifeguard staff when the Wyomissing Area School District returns to class, the pool will be closed on Thursday, August 21st and Friday, August 22nd. Ms. Drobnick shared an invitation from Muhlenberg Township on September 28th for a battle between West Reading and Muhlenberg Township Karaoke Stars. The Recreation Commission is proud to have started something that other townships would like to implement.

Motion to accept the Recreation Director's report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – The August Planning Commission meeting was cancelled. Mr. Lineaweaver thanked Mr. Wert and the Planning Commission for their hard work in amending the zoning ordinance that was approved last Thursday.
- c. **Economic Development Committee** – The August Economic Development Committee meeting was cancelled.
- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The July Environmental Advisory Council meeting was cancelled.
- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – The August Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting was cancelled.
- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – The August Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted review of a training video on hazardous spills. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

15. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 7/31/2025** – There were no questions or comments.
- b. **Payment Approval Report 7/16/25 to 8/15/25 and 8/16/25 to 8/19/25** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 7/31/2025, and Payment Approval Reports of 7/16/25 through 8/19/25. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Shaver. **Motion carried 6-0.**

16. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers commented on the BPT collector consideration and recommended the Treasurer's office reach out for verification as to the number of years delinquent taxes are being pursued. He indicated that a system is now in place between the Code Department and Treasurer's office and Berkheimer. He inquired as to the amount of revenue budgeted for 2025. Mr. Lineaweaver reported \$350,000 and revenues are on par to reach \$390,000 by year end.

Ms. Spang stated that she likes the proposed markings around Delaney Circle and asked if it would be possible to have flashing crosswalks. It was noted that a grant application has been submitted to install one at Fifth Avenue and Pine Street at a cost of \$180,000. She also asked if the intersection of Reading and Fourth Avenues could be a four-way stop. Mr. Grassley noted that a Local Technical Assistance Program representative (LTAP) analyzed this intersection and did not find that it met the criteria to implement a four-way stop.

Mr. Aden offered services of the State Representative's office to review Property Tax/Rent Rebates and letters of support for Local Share Account grants that are in season.

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Shaver and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary