

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

October 21, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, October 21, 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 Zanna Leiendecker; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; Code Department Manager & Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; Main Street Executive Director Nick Price; Engineer Pamela Stevens; Borough Manager Randall Miller; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Member Zachary Shaver was unable to attend.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident	Christina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner
Anthony Verrecchio, Resident	Robin Horman, Resident & Business Owner
Corina Piller, Resident	Karen Livingood, Resident
Vicki Graff, Resident	Justin Choate, Resident
Joseph Brennan, Resident	Maria Carbo, Resident
Diane Price, Armed Forces Day Parade Chairperson	Suzanne Thompson, Resident

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** An executive session was held on October 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss personnel matters.
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** There were no amendments to the agenda.
4. **INTRODUCTION OF POLICE OFFICERS:** Chief Tornielli stated that Officer Emily Zaharia could not make the meeting tonight and introduced Officer Gabriel Kolasa. Both officers graduated from the Police Academy in June and have been released from training and are working independently. Officer Kolasa came to us from the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served as a combat engineer for four years. Mr. Wert reported that Mr. Kolasa was a top-notch former student of his at Schuylkill Valley High School and congratulated him.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Price thanked staff, elected officials, and residents for their hospitality in hosting the 77th Armed Forces Day Parade. The next parade is scheduled for May 16, 2026. Certificates of appreciation were presented to the Mayor, Borough Manager, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, and Public Works Director. A \$500 donation was made to offset expenses associated with the services provided.

Mr. Rogers reported on Friday, October 10, that 15 vehicles were parked in GNA's lot and inquired whether the additional parking spaces at 433 Penn Avenue might be available for the Christmas season. Permission to move forward with implementing paid parking on 433 Penn Avenue will be discussed later this evening.

Mr. Wert publicly acknowledged Rosalie Loeper, a former Administrative Assistant, who passed away on September 25, 2025. Mrs. Loeper was a very dedicated employee who was pleasant with the residents and elected officials and retired from the borough in 2008.

Mr. Lineaweaver read aloud a written public comment from Brian Adams thanking elected officials and staff for ensuring public safety during events in the borough. He looks forward to collaborating on efforts to improve the town, to make West Reading an exceptional place.

6. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve September 16, 2025, regular meeting minutes and September 23, 2025, budget meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance – Residential Permit Parking Amendment** – Mr. Miller noted public discussions held during the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting on parking difficulties during street sweeping activity to find parking on an adjacent block designated as permit parking. A recommendation was made to expand the permit parking participant area through a resolution.

Motion to authorize advertisement of an ordinance amendment that would expand the Residential Permit Parking program to adjacent blocks. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Ordinance 1196 Vehicles and Traffic Amendments** – This ordinance amendment has been advertised. There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve an amendment that would remove a parking space on Lakeview Drive, remove the two-hour parking restriction on South Second Avenue, amend and add handicapped parking space designations, and amend the payment of ticketing fines to 72 hours. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Resolution 2025-28 Police Officers' Contributions to the Police Pension Plan** – Member contributions were proposed to remain at 8% in the coming year.

Motion to approve the Police Pension Plan members' contributions for the year 2026. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

8. **CONSULTANTS' REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker indicated that there was 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 – Seventh and Parkside, Seventh and Reading, Eighth and Hill** – Regular improvements that do not include ADA aspects are ready to be bid. Authorization to advertise was requested with plans to award a contract during the December 16, 2025 regular meeting.

Motion to authorize Systems Design Engineering, Inc. to advertise the Green Light-Go Year 9 project for bidding. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **DCED Green Light-Go Year 11 Grant Application – Reading Eighth and Hill** – Replacement of the mast arm and poles at this intersection will be presented to Traffic and Infrastructure for their feedback.
- **MORE Grant Level 2 Commercial Energy Audit** – Ms. Stevens inquired as to the outcome of the energy audit review by the Environmental Advisory Council. Mr. Kaag will provide feedback at a later date.
- **2025 Road Projects** – Final payment approval requests will be presented next month.
- **Important Dates** – Ms. Stevens provided a reminder as to the approaching expiration date of December 17th for the maintenance period of the 600 block of Spruce Street paving project.

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

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

Mr. Lineaweaver noted his attendance with the Borough Manager at the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) Fall Conference. Several connections were made, and progress was made on plans for the Spring Conference next year.

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

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

Mr. Miller reviewed the following:

- **Animal Control Officer** – Mr. Miller spoke of a meeting with representatives of the Animal Rescue League (ARL) to discuss aspects of a new program implemented last year aimed towards smaller municipalities, and their agreement to allow the borough to participate in this program. The fee-for-service memorandum of understanding is priced at \$200 per dog with a cap of fifteen dogs per year. Payments would be made quarterly based on the number of dogs brought to the ARL for care. A voucher program is available for \$50 per cat to support Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-and-Return (TNVR) efforts. It was noted that an individual who takes responsibility in such a manner is the owner of that cat and therefore responsible for feeding, sheltering, and caring for the animal. Current ordinance regulations prohibit the release of any animal at large in the borough. The number of vouchers to purchase and the potential ordinance amendment will be discussed at a later time.

Motion to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the Animal Rescue League for services in 2026. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Pennsylvania Strategic Investments to Enhance Sites (PA SITES) Grant Application** – Mr. Miller noted the recent grant application submitted to the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) to build a parking garage with grant funding. A PA SITES program was established to provide grant and loan funding to develop sites for businesses to relocate or expand. There is no maximum grant amount.

Motion to support an application for grant funding through the PA SITES program for \$12M for the construction of a parking garage at Sixth and Reading Avenues. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Additional Paid Parking Spaces** – Mr. Miller requested confirmation that Borough Council is on board to establish a paid parking zone within the 433 Penn Avenue parcel through the ParkMobile app. The rate would be discussed with the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee. Mr. Lineaweaver noted that roughly two months ago, the Borough Council agreed to the use of temporary paid parking on this parcel.

Motion to establish a paid parking program within the 433 Penn Avenue parcel. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- **Transportation Planning Grant Update** – Mr. Miller reported that a committee is being assembled to meet within the next six weeks.
- **Trestle Painting Update** – Mr. Miller had hoped to state that the painting project is underway. However, he is still working through the process with Norfolk Southern, which is up for sale. He can't say for sure that this project will happen this year, given the approaching winter weather.
- **Penn Avenue Streetlights** – Mr. Miller reported that the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation authorized the contribution of 50% of the purchase price of the seven or eight remaining streetlights in need of upgrades.

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

Ms. Stevens departed the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

11. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Kaag noted time spent this past month on the budget and Five-Year Strategic Plan. Mayor Kaag spoke with the West Reading Rotary Club to discuss projects for the Environmental Advisory Council. She is hopeful that a community garden may be an option. Mayor Kaag thanked Mr. Miller for his efforts in receiving a \$30,000 WalkWorks transportation grant. Grant opportunities are being pursued by the Police Department as well. A tent-connect event will take place during the first week of November please refer to social media for additional information. Mayor Kaag reminded residents to report incidents through the proper channels, such as an anonymous tip line or contacting the department directly. It was noted that the Voices of West Reading Facebook page is not monitored; please come to the police department directly.

Ms. Leiendecker suggested communication with the Rotaract Club for young adults who serve communities on projects that can include environmental initiatives.

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

12. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Tornielli thanked the Sheriff's office for supplying deputies and the Berks County Search and Rescue for providing a drone for their assistance at the Fall Festival.

The Reading Hospital Road Run took place last Sunday. This year, the West Reading Police Department took over planning for the event on behalf of the Borough of Wyomissing and the City of Reading. The event went well.

The RMS system grant-funded upgrade will go live on November 19. A quarterly metric report was provided this month in the spirit of transparency. Calls for service have been consistent over the past three months, averaging approximately 500 per month.

UCR Part 1 Crimes: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, vehicle theft, and arson are required to be reported to the State Police. All categories except one were below the five-year average. Due to a surge in burglaries in late September, this category exceeded the five-year average. The year 2025 is the second-lowest average, which is trending in the right direction.

Quality of Life Incidents: excessive noise, disorderly conduct, public intoxication, parking complaints, animal complaints, fireworks complaints, and ordinance violations affect a large number of residents. Disorderly conduct increased in September, primarily due to children going back and forth to school.

Motor Vehicle Crashes: reportable crash, non-reportable crash, hit and run crash, pedestrian crash totaled eighty-five for the quarter. Chief Tornielli noted the high confluence of vehicle and pedestrian traffic within the borough.

Officer Initiated Activities/Arrests: arrests, traffic stops, traffic citations, traffic warnings, parking citations, foot patrols, bicycle patrols, directed patrols, business checks, traffic checks, security checks, community contacts averaged over 600 per month during the last three months.

Use-of-Force/De-escalation Incidents: The department is required to report use-of-force incidents to the state police each month. These numbers are generally low — zero or one per year. The limited number of incidents is due to officers' effective de-escalation techniques. A policy was drafted that went into effect in September.

Vehicle Pursuits – There was one incident in the last three months.

Community Engagement Activities took place this past quarter at the National Night Out, French Fry Festival, Community Connect Tent Series and Fall Fest.

Policy Management – All policies are reviewed annually or biannually. Four policies were reviewed this past quarter.

Training – The department conducted training activities this past quarter, including Pepperball instructors and armorers certification, use-of-force instructor certification, K9, BCERT, and hostage negotiator monthly training, as well as firearms and Taser training and qualifications for new hires.

Damage Reports – Police vehicle 38-9 sustained minor roof damage when a gate at the car wash malfunctioned and fell onto the vehicle. The car wash covered the cost of the vehicle's repair.

A request was made to approve reimbursement of college tuition for an officer.

Motion to approve reimbursement of \$4,500 to an officer for college tuition. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Consideration was requested to approve the framework of the Police Department Five-Year Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The implementation of projects will be contingent upon the approval of funding by the borough or the award of grant funding.

Motion to approve the Police Department Five-Year Strategic Plan 2026-2030. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions about his report. He thanked Cumru Township and the City of Reading for meeting to address homelessness and the accumulation of trash near the fishing dock. He also thanked the Borough of Wyomissing for its assistance in removing large tree stumps. Mr. Miller thanked Mr. Grassley for his assistance over the last few weeks with the streetlight project and stump removals. He also congratulated Mr. Grassley on thirty years of service to the borough.

Motion to accept the Public Works Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and reported that the utility truck has been delayed due to Kinley Ford going out of business. The upfitting is complete; however, there is an issue with finalizing the purchase. A regional FEMA grant will be applied for, in collaboration with Cumru Township, the Borough of Wyomissing, the Shillington Fire Department, the Womelsdorf Fire Department, and Valley EMS, to purchase turnout gear.

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

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his report and noted a lot of business activity this past month. He said that a collaboration between the school district, public works, and police departments successfully identified an illegal trash dump of a sofa near the school playground. A notice was mailed with an image of the unlawful dump that resulted in the homeowner purchasing a bulk tag.

Consideration was requested for the borough's participation in the Zoning Hearing Board hearing regarding the revocation of a zoning permit issued to Prime Tobacco Zone, due to the business allegedly engaging in the illegal sale of drugs and associated unlawful activity at 438 Penn Avenue. Mr. Moyer noted that the hearing would be held on either November 24 or 26.

Motion to allow borough participation with solicitor representation in a Zoning Hearing Board hearing regarding the revocation of a zoning permit issued to Prime Tobacco Zone. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Moyer noted that the recent zoning ordinance amendment has allowed the owner of 730 Reading Avenue to convert the first-floor space to commercial use, now that parking requirements have been removed. This is the first step in expanding the commercial district.

It was noted that a Quality of Life ordinance is being drafted and reviewed by the Planning Commission, which would ticket violations such as high grass or trash to prompt a faster correction, thereby avoiding the long process of issuing a citation at the District Justice office. A citation fine would be more costly than a ticket.

Motion to accept the Code Department report. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Price provided the following highlights from his report:

- Fall Fest went well with over 31,000 people in attendance.
- The planters have been converted to a fall theme; a winter theme will be implemented near Thanksgiving.
- A profit and loss summary has been calculated for the French Fry Festival; the profit of \$8,720.19 will be donated to the Recreation Commission.
- The Second Friday in September was a pig roast luau that was well attended. The Second Friday in October had an issue with the hired company and had to alert over 100 people of the cancellation.
- The October Local Love event included College Night. Penn State bused over 200 students to the Avenue. The next one will be held in April.

Motion to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF) report. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Price departed the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

13. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – In the absence of Mr. Esterly, Ms. Drobnick reported that the commission met on October 7th with a quorum. The haunted house and hayride events were successful. Upcoming events are Dungeons & Dragons Night at the Bicentennial House on November 25 and the Tree Lighting Event on December 5. Plans are being finalized for next year's events.

Motion to accept the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – The October Planning Commission meeting was canceled.
- c. **Economic Development Committee** – The October Economic Development Committee meeting was canceled.
- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The September Environmental Advisory Council meeting was canceled.
- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Kaag noted key topics such as permit parking revisions to expand the program, municipal trash collection services for businesses, and a new towing contract. Consideration was requested to establish an ADA walkway from Reading

Avenue to the 101 North Seventh Avenue parking lot, with the potential to enter into a paid-use agreement for a privately owned parking lot with the borough.

Motion to explore the cost of engineering an ADA-compliant walkway from Reading Avenue to the 101 North Seventh Avenue parking lot. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Motion to accept the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

f. **Shade Tree Commission** – The October Shade Tree Commission meeting was canceled.

g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted review of office ergonomics.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

h. **Finance Committee** – The October Finance Committee meeting was canceled.

i. **Pension Advisory Committee** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted a meeting held yesterday afternoon that discussed extensively the elevated Minimum Municipal Obligation. Mr. Miller indicated that the switch made years ago to the PSAB pension was a good decision.

Motion to accept the Pension Advisory Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

14. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

a. **Transfer of Funds** – Consideration was requested for approving the transfer of \$600,000 from the M&T General Fund account to the PLGIT Prime account. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Leiendecker. **Motion carried 6-0.**

b. **Financial Statement Ending 9/30/2025** – There were no questions or comments.

c. **Payment Approval Report 9/17/25 to 10/17/25 and 10/18/25 to 10/21/25** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 9/30/2025, and Payment Approval Reports of 9/17/25 through 10/21/25. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

15. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Shenk mentioned that at the WRCRF meeting, it was discussed and approved that all non-WRCRF events, such as the bar crawls and wine walks, are not associated with the WRCRF. It was asked whether there were any thoughts on limiting the number of bar crawls, given that these events have become destructive. Mayor Kaag stated that this topic will be discussed with the Special Event Committee. Chief Tornielli believes that events primarily focused on alcohol consumption should be permitted, thereby providing a central point of contact, to offset the costs of the police and public works departments' involvement. He noted the comparison between an Art on the Avenue event with 19,000 people and a Santa Crawl event with the same number of visitors. Staff and resources are needed for both types of events.

Ms. Shenk inquired about the protocol and regulations for evicting problem tenants. Mr. Moyer indicated that the Rental Property ordinance includes a section on Disruptive Conduct that holds a landlord responsible for their tenant's actions. If a tenant receives three disruptive conduct reports within six months, the rental license may be revoked. The police department prepares a disruptive conduct report and forwards it to the code department. A notice is then mailed to the landlord within thirty days of the incident. He noted that simple noise-type complaints would not count towards the allotment. In the past year, he recalls four notices mailed to landlords. In all cases except one, the result was a change in behavior; in that instance, a tenant left voluntarily. Mr. Moyer stressed the importance of residents notifying or reporting incidents to improve their quality of life.

Mr. Rogers inquired about two right-to-know requests submitted for the Fall Festival and French Fry Festival, and didn't believe that he received a response. Mr. Miller indicated that responses had been provided and that he could recreate them if needed.

Ms. Carbo, who lives on Kline Street, noted trespassing and destructive neighbors that seem to be escalating. Mayor Kaag requested that Ms. Carbo meet with Chief Tornielli after the meeting adjourns.

Ms. Piller noted pushback from parents of the destructive children. She was thankful for the recent improvement that deterred loitering in front of garages. Ms. Piller spoke of a tree root lifting a sidewalk panel, causing a tripping hazard.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Leiendecker and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary