

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

**November 18, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, November 18, 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 Bethany Bower; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; Code Department Manager & Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Engineer Pamela Stevens; Borough Manager Randall Miller; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Members Zanna Leiendoeker and Zachary Shaver were unable to attend.

**VISITORS:**

James Rogers, Resident  
Karen Livingood, Resident  
Michael Hart, Resident  
Michael Fitzgerald, Visitor  
Adam Berkeley, Visitor

Christina Shenk, Resident & Business Owner  
Justin Choate, Resident (via Zoom)  
Matthew Walborn, Western Berks Water Authority  
Angela Adler, Visitor

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:** There was no executive session held this evening.
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** There were no amendments to the agenda.
4. **LAUREN'S FOUNDATION:** Mr. Fitzgerald thanked Borough Council and Mr. Esterly for allowing them to conduct their annual Fitzy's Run event. The event was a great success. A token of appreciation in the amount of \$2,500 was presented to the Recreation Department to use for events benefiting children.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers asked to view a copy of the proposed 2026 budget and wondered if an official Right-to-Know request was needed. The document has been advertised and is available for public viewing.

Mrs. Livingood inquired as to Borough Council's budgeting decision to allocate funds to the Wyomissing Public Library. Mr. Lineaweaver indicated that \$2,500 has been proposed in the 2026 budget for any local library program offerings in the borough.

Mr. Lineaweaver offered the representatives of Western Berks Water Authority, Mr. Walborn and Mr. Hart, the opportunity to use the Public Comment period, as there was no other opportunity on the agenda. Mr. Walborn offered to answer any questions that Borough Council may have. Mr. Grassley indicated that Mr. Walborn provided a proposed budget earlier today. There were no questions or comments.

**6. APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve October 21, 2025, regular meeting minutes, October 28, 2025, and November 8, 2025, budget meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

**7. ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

a. **Ordinance – Off-Street Metered Parking Amendment** – Mr. Lineaweaver stated this amendment would add the Penn Avenue municipal lot and provide provisions to suspend enforcement temporarily and the authority to establish no parking or special-purpose parking zones.

Motion to authorize advertisement of an ordinance amendment that would include the 433 Penn Avenue municipal parking lot and provide provisions to suspend enforcement or establish special-purpose parking zones temporarily. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

b. **Ordinance 1197 Residential Permit Parking Amendment** – This ordinance amendment would expand the permit parking program to adjacent blocks to allow neighboring residents to use the permit parking program to alleviate strain during street sweeping or other no-parking events.

Motion to approve an amendment to expand the permit parking program to adjacent block resident use. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 5-0.**

c. **Resolution 2025-29 Residential Permit Parking Program Participant Expansion** – This resolution specifies the locations of expansion to the program for adjacent block residents.

Motion to approve the list of specified residential permit parking expansion blocks to include additional participants. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

d. **Resolution 2025-30 Fee Schedule Amendment** – Amendments to various recreation fees, such as increases to the field trip, additional child, swim lessons, pool party staffing, Bicentennial House rentals, park area vendor fees, and metered parking were proposed.

Motion to approve Resolution 2025-30 Fee Schedule Amendments. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

e. **Resolution 2025-31 Suspension of Parking Fines and Meter Rates** – Mr. Lineaweaver shared the intent of providing free parking on the Penn Avenue municipal lot during Black Friday and Small Business Saturday to promote the overall economic development of businesses, shops, and restaurants in the West Reading business district.

Motion to approve the suspension of parking fines and meter rates on the Penn Avenue municipal lot from November 28, 2025, through November 29, 2025. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

**8. CONSULTANTS' REPORT:**

a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker spoke of a contract review for a structural engineer to assist the borough in navigating the retaining wall deficiencies at the Candlewood Suites property.

The contract format was geared toward assisting privately owned property. Therefore, revisions to the agreement are needed that would apply to non-borough owned property. Approval of the contract was requested, subject to acceptance of the revisions.

Motion to appoint a structural engineer. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

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

- **Structural Engineering** – A draft proposal for a team approach consultant was provided to the Borough Manager for future consideration. Ms. Stevens noted that Systems Design Engineering, Inc. has hired an experienced structural engineer. Mr. Miller shared plans to discuss the appointment of an engineer during the regular December Borough Council meeting.
- **DCED Green Light-Go Year 11 Grant Application – Reading Eighth and Hill Avenues** – Replacement of the deteriorating mast arms and poles is planned at this intersection. Traffic Planning and Design has submitted a Professional Services Agreement to investigate the intersection, prepare a location map, and prepare a scoping cost estimate for \$2,580.

Motion to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Traffic Planning and Design (TPD) for \$2,580 and authorizing TPD and Systems Design Engineering, Inc. to apply for the Green Light-Go Year 11 grant funding for final traffic signal improvements to the intersection of Reading, Eighth, and Hill Avenues. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- **2025 Road Projects** – Ms. Stevens recommended approval of a credit amount of \$62,492.30 and final payment application in the amount of \$266,799.72 to H&K Group, Inc. to close out the 2025 Road Projects.

Motion to approve the H&K Group, Inc. Compensating Change Order No. 1 for Contract A 2025 Road project for \$62,492.30. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Motion to approve the H&K Group, Inc. Final Payment Application No. 1 for \$266,799.72, conditioned upon receiving the required closeout documentation. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- **Important Dates** – Ms. Stevens provided a reminder as to the approaching expiration date of December 17<sup>th</sup> for the maintenance period of the 600 block of Spruce Street paving project.

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

9. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Mr. Lineaweafer had nothing new to report.

10. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mr. Miller had nothing new to report.

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

**11. MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Kaag provided a verbal report noting the following:

- Attendance at the Special Event Committee meeting, where discussions are underway to supplement the Special Events/Public Gatherings ordinance section to ensure safety and responsibility for bar crawl-type events in the future.
- Mayor Kaag thanked elected officials and staff for preparing and proposing a 2026 budget.
- Attendance at the Berks County Girls on the Run event was enjoyable to watch, as their confidence grew.

Motion to accept the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower.

**Motion carried 5-0.**

**12. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Tornielli reported that October was the busiest month of the year with 1,216 department activities. The Reading Hospital Road Run went well with no issues experienced during the event. Extra deployments are planned for the Small Business Saturday, the Tree Lighting events, and the Santa Bar Crawl, if that occurs. The RMS upgrade will go live tomorrow. Special thanks went out to Sergeant Phillips and Officer Karetas, who spearheaded the project that was funded by the PCCD grant.

During last month's Council meeting, complaints were made about activities in the vicinity of Kline Street. Based on these complaints, officers spent about a week talking with various residents in the neighborhood to get a sense of what was happening. The information was shared with patrol supervisors, who generated a plan to address the issues. The two weeks following strategically directed patrols saw five security checks, six foot patrols, one traffic check, and the identification of six parking issues and a suspicious person. A person who ducked behind a parked vehicle to hide from an officer resulted in a foot chase and drug arrest. The main deployment on November 10 for the Community Connect Tent brought residents out to visit with officers. Chief Tornielli stated that this was an example of how things should work: identify the problem, formulate a plan, and achieve positive results in a timely manner.

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

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions about his report. He noted the completion of this year's list of sidewalk panel replacements in areas where borough trees had been removed. He believes that next year they may move into addressing areas where trees remain. He requested permission to extend the assignment of the part-time laborer for one month to cover limited staffing during December. There are enough funds available within the budget.

Motion to extend the part-time laborer position through December 2025. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

Ms. Stevens departed the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and noted progress on completing the purchase and registration of Utility 64 replacement. Once in service, the current utility truck will be handed down to Traffic 64. Consideration was requested to sell the vehicle that is currently in use as Traffic 64.

Motion to authorize the sale of the 2009 Chevrolet utility truck. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Chief Moyer noted that the rear man door at the firehouse does not unlatch when scanned with the key fob. He recommended using the Playground Drive entrance until Berks Security can repair the rear door.

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

d. **Code Department** – An additional project of interest was shared by Mr. Moyer for a café to occupy the commercial space on North Sixth Avenue.

The responsible parties for the Candlewood Suites retaining wall issue have been given 45 days to submit soil test results and revised plans for repairing the original retaining wall.

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

e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF)** – In the absence of Mr. Price, Mr. Lineaweafer provided the following highlights from his report:

- A successful college night was held with all local colleges being represented.
- The Second Friday event in November was another movie night partnered with Blankets of Hope, which provided 200 blankets for movie-goers.
- Plans are underway for Small Business Saturday with a merchandise tent, DJ, heated tent providing massages, photos with Santa, and a Christmas backdrop provided by Mendez Flooring. Three billboards outside the area will be used to market the Avenue for the holiday shopping season.
- The winter planters have been ordered and will be planted at the end of the month.
- A window decorating contest will be held through December, and winners will be awarded cash prizes.
- The WRCRF will be assisting with the Ice and Spice event from January 23 through 25.
- The November Local Love event has partnered with Helping Harvest. Consideration was requested to partially close North Sixth Avenue for the Helping Harvest van to park and set up for the event. Mr. Lineaweafer noted this should be the last, last-

minute request. In the new year, all road closure requests will be submitted at the beginning of the year.

Motion to approve the closure of North Sixth Avenue from Penn Avenue to Court Street on Thursday, November 20, 2025, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

### 13. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly noted upcoming events that included Dungeons and Dragons night at the Bicentennial House on Tuesday, November 25, from 5:00-7:30 p.m., and the 97<sup>th</sup> annual Tree Lighting event that's scheduled on Friday, December 5, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Holiday Home Decorating Contest, scheduled for the weekend of December 19, may have a sponsor come on board. A request was made to approve partial road closures for the Tree Lighting event.

Motion to approve partial road closures of Delaney Circle, Reading Avenue, and Fifth Avenue for the Holiday Tree Lighting event on Friday, December 5, with a rain date of Monday, December 8, 2025. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mayor Kaag thanked Mr. Esterly for his efforts in making this year's events thrive.

Motion to accept the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert noted continued discussions on impervious coverage, stormwater, and civic space design standards with consultants. A Zoning Appeal for 634 Penn Avenue was discussed regarding the upper-floor unpermitted conversion from commercial to residential use without the required off-street parking. A recommendation was made for Borough Council to enter an appearance on behalf of the borough. Mr. Wert indicated that the change of use was not in the spirit of recent Zoning amendments. The conforming use of office space was preferred.

Motion to enter an appearance as a party to the Zoning Appeal Hearing for 634 Penn Avenue in opposition to the variance request. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mr. Moyer noted that a Zoning Hearing for the 438 Penn Avenue appeal has requested an extension. This hearing will be scheduled in January.

Mr. Wert shared that regulations about Games of Skill are being reviewed at the request of Mr. Moyer. The Solicitor's office has been asked to provide feedback. At present, there are no regulations at any level. Mr. Wert recommended getting a handle on these types of uses that are not healthy for the community.

Motion to accept the Planning Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – The November Economic Development Committee meeting was canceled.
- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The October Environmental Advisory Council meeting was canceled.
- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Kaag provided a verbal report in the absence of meeting minutes, noting the following:
  - Audio upgrades to the Council Chamber have been performed in-house to improve the virtual experience.
  - Thermoplastic markings within the traffic circle are planned in next year's paving project bid specifications.
  - The list of potential parking spaces was reviewed with plans to install spaces in four locations when the weather allows.
  - The Green Light-Go Year 11 grant application was discussed.
  - The internal policy regarding responsibility for water payment was reviewed.
  - Updates were provided on the status of establishing parking on 433 Penn Avenue.
  - Survey results were reviewed from businesses about Penn Avenue paid and handicapped parking.
  - Updates to a draft of the Micromobility Vehicle ordinance were discussed.
  - Bushes have been trimmed at the Juniata and Buttonwood Street intersection to improve line-of-sight issues.

Mr. Miller spoke about a request, several years ago, to provide tenants with copies of the water, sewer, and trash bills. It was noted that this violates the borough's ordinance. This practice has continued up to this time. At present, an additional 175 invoices are mailed to tenants every quarter. Issues have arisen in instances when a tenant vacates a property without paying an outstanding balance. We are looking to restore the policy to its original intent of no third-party billing. Notifications of this policy change would be provided to both the tenant and the owner of the rental property. The policy of notifying both the tenant and the owner would continue in the event of a pending shut-off for non-payment. The ability for a tenant to view account information online would be a viable alternative. Mr. Wert reported that he pays his rental property invoices, knowing that he is ultimately responsible for the account.

Mr. Miller spoke of a cellular program that has become available, which would alert the borough and the owner/tenant through an app to high or low usage. Grant funding will be applied for in the near future.

Motion to eliminate the internal policy of mailing a copy of the water bill to a third party. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Motion to accept the verbal Traffic and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – The November Shade Tree Commission meeting was canceled.
- g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Lineaweafer noted review of office ergonomics. Assured Partners conducted a risk control survey. A safety and health survey of the Police Department and Borough Garage was conducted as required.

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

- h. **Finance Committee** – The November Finance Committee meeting was canceled.

**14. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Transfer of Funds** – Consideration was requested for approving the transfer of \$775,000 from the PLGIT Prime account to the M&T General Fund account. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Bower. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Approval of the reinvestment of the \$1.5M TERM maturing on November 20, 2025 was requested. Mrs. Rentschler noted declining rates and recommended reinvesting \$1.5M in a 365-day term at approximately 3.84% interest. The second six-month expiring term was advised to lapse for a period of six months. Those funds would be transferred to the PLGIT PRIME account, which is currently earning 4.04%. Mrs. Rentschler recommended reviewing options in May of next year to reinvest those funds.

Motion to reinvest one PLGIT Term for \$1.5M into a 365-day TERM at approximately 3.84% interest. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **Financial Statement Ending 10/31/2025** – There were no questions or comments.
- c. **Payment Approval Report 10/22/25 to 11/14/25 and 11/15/25 to 11/18/25** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 10/31/2025, and Payment Approval Reports of 10/22/25 through 11/18/25. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

**15. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

**16. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary