

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

February 17, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Patrick Kaag; Council Pro-Tem Denise Drobnick; Council Members Bethany Bower, Vicki Haller Graff, Justin Choate; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; Code Department Manager & Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Main Street Executive Director Nick Price; Borough Manager Randall Miller. Council Member Zanna Leiendecker was unable to attend.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident	Nancy Campbell, Business Owner
Karen Livingood, Resident	Andrew Moletress, Resident
Michael Witmyer, Resident	Charlie Wanyo, Resident
Mark Dougherty, Business Owner	Philip Wert, 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. **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) PRESENTATION:** Mr. Wert, a member of the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF), provided an overview of the nine-year process of preparing a package of services for the business district, funded by the business district as a fee. In previous years, a BID was in place in the business district from 2004 through 2008, which was minimal in nature. A preliminary plan was presented covering a five-year period, including marketing, power washing, streetscape maintenance, grant writing, and related services. The proposed budget is \$109,200, with half going towards promotions and marketing. The fee per parcel is \$650 per annum. The process for implementing a BID requires a public hearing, a detailed plan for services/improvements, and an ordinance adopted by property owners per parcel. Any non-votes are considered yes votes. Property owners are currently in favor of this prospect. July 1 is a target date to begin. Mr. Wert recognized Nancy Campbell for her efforts in preparing this BID package. It was noted that funds are to be collected by the WRCRF. However, if anyone fails to remit funds, the borough would be required to file a lien against the property. Mr. Lineaweaver thanked members of the WRCRF for attending tonight's meeting to explain the BID package.
3. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** There was an executive session held this evening to discuss personnel and union contract negotiation matters.
4. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** There were no amendments to the agenda.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
Mr. Rogers inquired about a borough policy or action that could be taken against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents being stationed at polling places in the borough. Chief Tornielli stated that the Commonwealth does not permit police officers or other law enforcement personnel in polling places unless requested by the judge of elections. It was noted that this unprecedented time offers no guidance. Mr. Rogers expressed concern for ICE regional

headquarters occupying the old Palmer buildings. It was noted that these properties are still privately owned.

Mr. Witmyer expressed concern about sidewalk panels lifted by borough trees. He understands there is a program where the borough replaces the affected sidewalk panels and noted that someone tripped near his home the other day. He asked whether he could spray-paint the affected panels until the borough replaces them. Mr. Moyer noted that sidewalk repair is the responsibility of the property owner. However, the borough recognizes that trees contribute to repair needs. Following a decade-long moratorium on sidewalk maintenance, a program was established to identify the 10 highest-priority locations each year, where the Public Works Department replaces the tree-affected panels. Mr. Moyer noted that spray painting the affected area and placing cones to draw attention to the tripping hazard would be acceptable.

Mrs. Livingood publicly commended the borough crew who assisted her in navigating Linden Lane during a watermain break. In a conversation with crew members about the gap between days off caused by weather and water main breaks, it was noted that Chef David's Pizza & More donated pizzas to the Public Works Department.

6. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the January 20, 2026, regular meeting minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance 1204 Vacant Premises Water Service Amendment** – There were no questions or comments on revisions to the vacant premises proposed fee revisions.

Motion to adopt an amendment to remove the minimum charge for temporarily disconnected water service from Section 441-13 and establish monthly and quarterly charges via resolution. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Resolution 2026-5 Fee Schedule Amendment** – The inclusion of monthly and quarterly vacant premises fees of \$9.90 and \$29.70, respectively, was proposed.

Motion to adopt an amendment to the fee schedule to include monthly and quarterly vacant premises fees. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

8. **CONSULTANTS' REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Questions arose regarding control of the after parties of the restaurant-organized bar crawl-type events. Mr. Becker indicated that little can be done other than to ask them to act responsibly. Chief Torielli noted proposed language changes to the special event permitting regulations to address such events, including the addition of litter control. Proposed amendments will be coming forward soon.

Mr. Wert departed the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

The regulations governing the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) program were discussed. The lifespan was 10 years that expired in 2025. Businesses are interested in leveraging the LERTA program. Therefore, an ordinance would need to be reenacted.

Motion to authorize the solicitor to draft a LERTA program ordinance. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

b. **Engineer's Report** – In Ms. Steven's absence, Mr. Miller reviewed her action items:

1. **Green Light-Go Year 10 ADA Improvements** – Traffic signal intersection upgrades to Seventh Avenue and Parkside Drive North, Seventh Avenue and Reading Avenue, and Reading Avenue and Eighth Avenue and Hill Road were recommended to be authorized to begin the design process, to then bid in early 2027.

Motion to authorize Systems Design Engineering, Inc. (SDE) and Traffic Planning & Design to start the design of the proposed Green Light-Go Year 10 ADA improvements. **Moved** by Ms. Graff and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

2. **2026 Road Projects** – Estimates that include North and South Sixth Avenue, Reading Avenue, Court Street, Parkview Road, South Second Avenue (200 Block), and rebuild Cowboy Alley is \$350,000.

Motion to authorize SDE to prepare the 2026 road project bid package and put out to bid with a bid opening/award date of March 12, 2026. **Moved** by Mr. Choate and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

3. **2025 Chapter 94 Municipal Wasteload Management Annual Report** – SDE is in the process of finalizing the annual report and has requested authorization to execute the report to submit to the municipal authority later this month.

Motion to authorize the Borough Manager to execute the 2025 Chapter 94 Municipal Wasteload Management Annual Report and submit to the Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

4. **Green Light-Go Year 9 Traffic Signal Upgrades** – Traffic signal upgrades to Seventh Avenue and Parkside Drive North, Seventh Avenue and Reading Avenue, and Reading Avenue and Eighth Avenue and Hill Road were recommended to execute the contract agreement.

Motion to authorize the Borough Manager to execute the Green Light-Go Year 9 traffic signal upgrades contract agreement with Telco Group, LLC. **Moved** by Ms. Bower and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

9. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Mr. Lineaweaver had nothing new to report this month other than what is already on the agenda.

10. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mr. Miller reviewed the following items:

- a. **Planning Commission Vacancy** – A letter of interest was received to fill a vacancy on the Planning Commission. Charlie Wanyo, a resident of Ann Street for 10 years and a

professional in industrial development, expressed an interest in giving back to the community.

Motion to appoint Charles Wanyo to the Planning Commission with a term expiring on December 31, 2029. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. **Gateway Project** – Mr. Miller requested ratification of a written request to extend the Department of Community Economic Development (DCED) Gateway Project deadline through June of 2027.

Motion to ratify a request to extend the DCED Gateway Project deadline for one year. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- c. **Personnel Matter** – Per executive session discussions and the borough solicitor's recommendation, a motion was made to take action on a personnel matter. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**

- d. **BID Proceedings** – The following aspects were reviewed for Borough Council approval:

- Consideration of mailing the Preliminary BID Plan to property owners and lessees in the proposed West Reading Business Improvement District (WRBID), which must take place at least 30 days prior to the hearing.
- Consideration of advertising the hearing on the Preliminary Plan for the WRBID at least 10 days prior to the hearing.
- Consideration of conducting a hearing on the WRBID Preliminary Plan, and any further hearings which may be needed if the Preliminary Plan is modified after the hearing.
- Consideration of preparing the BID ordinance. This ordinance does not need to be advertised with the preliminary plan because it is adopted with the final plan.

Motion to authorize the above-referenced WRBID proceedings. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Miller and Mr. Becker discussed the ongoing deed restrictions associated with the firehouse parcel, which was built on recreation land. The building footprint information has been provided to the DCED for their use in the desired deed restriction language.

Mr. Miller provided an update on ongoing meetings with Reading Hospital regarding the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement.

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

11. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Kaag provided a verbal report recapping a slow month:

- She met with former Senator Bob Casey regarding a fire department item, which will be elaborated on at a later date.
- Mayor Kaag noted the recent passing of Dr. Corey Jones of the Wyomissing School District and offered her condolences to the families affected by this loss.

- Henry Diener, Jr., a resident of West Reading Borough who was often seen walking around the borough, also recently passed away.
- Attended the Be Mine Help a Girl Out event. A box is available in the Police Department Lobby for donating diapers, pads, and tampons.
- A reminder was provided for the Wednesday, March 18, Town Hall event at the firehouse with Senator Judy Schwank and State Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz.

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

12. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Tornielli noted a busy month with 502 total calls for service in January. An assessment and review of special event security procedures will be conducted to ensure proper staffing, support services, technology, and intelligence functions are appropriately deployed for 2026 events. Chief Tornielli thanked office staff for working with the RMS vendor to resolve data-transfer issues affecting the accuracy of analytics and mapping programs. On January 21, all supervisors attended a webinar that provided guidance on examining video evidence. On January 2, officers participated in DUI roving patrols funded by the Highway Safety Network. During those patrols, officers conducted 14 traffic stops, which resulted in 15 citations being issued and three arrests for DUI/drug arrest, drug arrest, and firearms arrest. Chief Tornielli thanked the Public Works Department for keeping roadways in the borough as clear as possible during the recent snowstorm.

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

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions about his report. He offered Borough Council members a ride-along during plowing events to provide an in-depth experience and knowledge of the inner workings. Mayor Kaag also thanked Public Works for their efforts in addressing recent water main breaks.

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

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and noted that the annual Chicken BBQ fundraiser will be held on March 29. There were no questions or comments.

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

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer provided an update on his report, noting that Deep Roots Café has successfully completed the commercial certificate of occupancy inspection and is cleared to operate at 20-22 N. Sixth Avenue. The garage structure at 542 Franklin Street, subject to condemnation, remains unchanged. Therefore, citations and an order to demolish the structure were issued today to the owner.

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

- e. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF)** – Mr. Price spoke of the Ice and Spice event that went well, regardless of the cold weather. Changes will be implemented next year following this year’s observations. Preparations are underway for PennDOT approval to close Penn Avenue for the Craft Pretzel & Beer Festival. The ticketed Chili Fest event is scheduled on March 15. And, the second Friday events are growing with more than 46 businesses participating.

Motion to accept the WRCRF report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Graff.

Motion carried 6-0.

13. **COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly referred to his report and noted a Young Magician’s Night planned next week at the Bicentennial House. A Dungeons & Dragons Night is planned on March 5 at the Bicentennial House. An Egg Hunt is planned for March 29, and a Fishing Rodeo is planned for April 11. Review of seasonal staffing has begun.

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

- b. **Planning Commission** – The February Planning Commission meeting was cancelled.
- c. **Economic Development Committee** – The February Economic Development Committee meeting was cancelled.
- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The January Environmental Advisory Council meeting was cancelled.
- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – The February Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting was cancelled.
- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – The February Shade Tree Commission meeting was cancelled.
- g. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted review of walking safely in icy conditions.
Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Graff. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- h. **Finance Committee** – The February Finance Committee meeting was cancelled.

14. **TREASURER’S REPORT:**

- a. **Financial Statement Ending 1/31/2026** – There were no questions or comments.
- b. **Payment Approval Report 1/21/26 to 2/13/26 and 2/14/26 to 2/17/26** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 1/31/2026, and Payment Approval Reports of 1/21/26 through 2/17/26. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

15. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers spoke of the snow emergency routes and requested consideration of establishing a route that would serve the new townhomes on the north side of town. He intends to broach the subject during the next Traffic and Infrastructure Committee meeting.

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16. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary