

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

June 23, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, June 23, 2026 with the following persons present: Council President Ryan Lineaweaver; Council Vice President Patrick Kaag; Council Pro-Tem Denise Drobnick; Council Members Justin Choate, and Vicki Haller Graff; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Solicitor Daniel Becker; Engineer Pamela Stevens; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; Code Department Manager & Fire Chief Chad Moyer; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Recreation Director Michael Esterly; Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Assistant Treasurer Helen Moyer; Borough Manager Randall Miller (via Zoom); Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Council Members Bethany Bower and Maggie Seaman were unable to attend.

VISITORS:

James Rogers, Resident	Karen Livingood, Resident
Nicole Rivieccio, Resident	Israel Arce, Resident
John Turner, Business Owner	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Ryan Lineaweaver called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** An executive session was not held this evening.
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** President Lineaweaver requested consideration to amend the agenda to include a discussion and potential action on a special event application just received today. A motion was made by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate to amend the agenda to add an action item under the Manager's report. **Motion carried 5-0.**
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
Mr. Rogers provided an update on repairs to the low-hanging cable lines on Court Street near the American Diner. He reported that a technician arrived on Friday afternoon around 5:30 p.m. and worked roughly two hours making repairs.
5. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**
Motion to approve the May 20, 2026, regular meeting minutes. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**
6. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**
 - a. **Ordinance – Parking Prohibited at All Times & Special Purpose Parking Amendments –** Motion to authorize the advertisement for amendments to allow parking on the west side of the 100 Block of North Seventh Avenue, allow parking on the east side of the 200 Block of South Sixth Avenue, and add a handicap parking space on the 300 Block of South Third Avenue. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**
 - b. **Resolution 2026-12 Berks County Tax Collection Executive Committee Delegate –** Motion to appoint Eden Ratliffe from the Borough of Wyomissing as the Primary Delegate and Randall Miller as an Alternate Delegate of the Tax Collection Committee. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**
 - c. **Resolution 2026-13 Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant –** Motion to adopt a resolution for the Third and Penn Avenue multimodal transportation fund grant application to install

rapid flashing beacons at this intersection at a cost of \$257,115. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- d. **Resolution 2026-14 Curative Zoning Amendment** – Mr. Becker explained a curative amendment that would allow the borough to address missing use permissions in the Zoning Ordinance, including, but not limited to, data centers that tend to be large facilities that consume lots of water and electricity, as well as cause noise and vibrations. A curative amendment would allow 180 days to amend the ordinance to include performance standards regulating the types of cooling systems and controlling vibrations to avoid disturbing others. It was noted that the state has recognized these issues and has introduced House Bill 2496, which is working its way through the legislative approval process. Formal action to adopt a resolution would provide a stopgap for developers' submissions that would otherwise be unregulated. However, this action would declare the ordinance invalid, as it relates to data centers, and preclude the ability to cure it for a period of three years. Within 30 days, another resolution must be adopted stating the reasons for the curative amendment. It was recommended that the amendment be prepared within 90 days to allow time to meet advertising requirements. Mr. Moyer requested that catch-all stipulations be included in the amendment to require unidentified uses to be considered through the special exception process. It was decided to move ahead with adopting the resolution rather than waiting for the state to pass regulations.

Motion to enact a curative amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to address missing use permissions, including but not limited to data centers. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Chief Tornielli arrived at 6:19 p.m.

7. **CONSULTANTS' REPORT:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Becker did not have anything new to report at this time.
- b. **Engineer's Report** – Ms. Stevens reviewed a number of reimbursement requests submitted this past month for Green Light-Go, Ann Street, and Gateway projects. Reviews of roof-mounted solar panels for the Bicentennial House and the Fire House are underway, funded by the MORE Grant for these two energy conservation projects. Design of the Fifth Avenue and Pine Street rapid-flashing beacon is underway, with construction planned for next year. The Playground Drive sidewalk replacement project is on hold for budgetary reasons. Tree removal and stump grinding are to be completed this year. A notice to proceed has been issued for the 2026 road projects. The Federal Government grant opportunity had been missed on multiple levels, including the invitation, a time-consuming benefit-cost ratio analysis, and the requirement that the project be included in the hazard mitigation plan. Replacement of ten HVAC units is being applied for through the Met-Ed Energy Sustainability grant at a cost of \$76,360. There was no update to the list of remediation questions associated with 118 Franklin Street. Grant-funded interior renovations to the Police Department are being prepared for discussion at next month's meeting.

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

8. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** President Lineaweaver spoke of the recent Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs (PSAB) conference where he was elected as 2nd Vice President of the Borough Council's Association. A presentation was provided at the conference highlighting the positive aspects of serving on Borough Council.

President Lineaweaver noted the intent of using the 433 Penn Avenue lot for multiple purposes. Mr. Turner stated that he started working with the idea of a temporary skateboarding ramp last year with the Promotions Committee and proposed a scalable ramp pop-up roughly 15' x 20' placed below the billboard area utilizing three parking spaces from September 1 to the Fall Festival on September 20. Liability aspects were discussed and would be addressed through the borough and Holistic Skateshop insurance companies. There would be no expenses incurred by the borough. A special music event could be planned on the 2nd Friday of September. The subject was tabled until the July meeting to ensure that insurance aspects can be met.

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

9. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:** President Lineaweaver offered to review Mr. Miller's report due to a delay in transmission via Zoom. The West Reading Business Improvement District (WRBID) failed. Therefore, the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation will need to consider if it's feasible to piece something together that may garner enough votes. The following two action items were reviewed:

- a. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – Consideration was requested to remain a member of the CDBG program for the next three years. It is not necessary to be involved; however, there is no harm in staying with the program.

Motion to remain a member of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks Community Development Block Grant program. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **Letter of Resignation** – The Administrative Clerk has submitted a letter of resignation after serving 19 years in that particular role with a total of 26 years of experience here in West Reading. The goal is to hire a candidate during next month's meeting.

Motion to accept a letter of resignation from the Administrative Clerk and authorization to advertise to fill this position. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- c. **Special Event Application** – Mayor Kaag shared the Berks County Latino Chamber of Commerce's desire to host a FIFA soccer watch event on July 10 at the pavilion and field area. It was unclear at the time whether food and drink vendors would be requested for the event. Special approval would be needed from Borough Council to allow alcohol in the park area. Final plans would be required by July 1 for review by the Special Event Committee.

Motion to approve the Soccer Watch event on July 10, 2026. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Motion to approve food and alcohol in the park, pending required permits for vendors by July 1. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

Ms. Stevens departed the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

10. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Kaag reviewed her written report, noting the following:

- Welcomed Governor Josh Shapiro and DCED Secretary Rick Siger to West Reading on May 26 to highlight local businesses, including the announcement of a \$60,000 state investment in the Borough of West Reading.
- Continued working with the Police Chief and Borough Administration on Police Department operations, personnel matters, budgeting, event planning, and collective bargaining discussions.
- On June 4, she received the PSAB Mayor of the Year Award.
- Assisted with public communication for the procession honoring Officer Kristen Yeager.
- Had the privilege of officiating two wedding ceremonies.
- Participated in the Pride flag raising and issued a Pride Month proclamation.
- Participated in a youth leadership program, "Be Bold, Be Brave," focusing on public service and civic engagement.
- Welcomed Maggie Seaman following her appointment to Borough Council.
- Attended the Plein Air West Reading Patrons' Preview and Awards presentation.
- Participated in Art on the Avenue recognizing public-safety personnel, borough employees and volunteers who supported the event.
- Preparing for National Night Out to be held on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

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

11. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

a. **Police Department** – Chief Tornielli highlighted the following:

- Calls for service and officer-initiated activities in May tracked as normal.
- Hosted two big events this month: the Armed Forces Day Parade was shortened to just Penn Avenue, which seemed a little better attended. Last Saturday was the Art on the Avenue event. A special thanks was offered to the Berks County Sheriff's Office, which provided several sheriff's deputies for our uniform patrols, the Berks County Search and Rescue Station, and the FBI and Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center for their support. There were no real incidents to report.

- The sergeant's written examination will be administered by the Civil Service Commission on July 25, 2026. It was thought that in September a recommendation would be brought to the Borough Council for approval.
- The project selected for the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) grant opportunity is the replacement of body-worn cameras that are nearing the end of their life. It was noted that only two years of video storage funding can be requested.
- The West Reading Police Department was awarded a \$6,518.96 grant from the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance under the fiscal year 2025 Bulletproof Vest Partnership program. These funds will help offset the cost of ballistic vests that are due for replacement in 2026.
- The overtime expended to cover shift staffing requirements for patrol is down significantly this year from \$81,000 in 2024 to \$34,000 in 2026. The overlapping shifts on both squads allow one of those officers to move into that position without having to cover all those shifts with overtime. The added benefit is that we can give our officers more personal time.
- Consideration was requested to authorize the Chief of Police to apply for funding from the DHS State Homeland Security Grant Program. Chief Tornielli noted that much of our ballistic equipment is due for replacement. This would replace helmets, ballistic shields, and rifle-rated body armor.

Motion to authorize the Chief of Police to apply for funding from the Homeland Security Grant Program in the amount of \$55,000 to replace ballistic personal protective equipment. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- Consideration was requested to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) for their learning center at Highland Center. We currently have an MOU in place, but there are statutory reporting changes that need to be updated.

Motion to authorize the Chief of Police to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Berks County Intermediate Unit Learning Center at Highlands Center to define responsibilities for incidents. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- Consideration was requested to authorize the Civil Service Commission to commence the process to fill entry-level positions. This would place us in a good position if we need the police academy in January.

Motion to authorize the Civil Service Commission to commence the entry-level testing process and contract with the PA Chiefs of Police to conduct the written examination and structured interview process. **Moved** by Mr. Choate and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

- b. **Public Works Department** - Mr. Grassley offered to answer any questions about his report and determined that the radar device authorized for purchase last month for the Police Department could be funded in part and shared with the Public Works Department. Funding a second radar device could be considered in the future. Mr. Lineaweaver noted fresh line painting that looks nice. Mayor Kaag inquired about the need for a stop sign at the intersection of Ann Street and Sunset Road. It was noted that this is not in the ordinance; however, a traffic study was conducted and recommended the removal of several parking spaces. Mayor Kaag thanked the Public Works Department for their services during the Art on the Avenue event.

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

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Moyer referred to his written report and noted that the last garage bay door has been ordered and that he hopes it will arrive soon. A grant application has been submitted to replace \$150,000 worth of personal protective equipment that's either nearing the end of its life or not sized for the wearer.

Mr. Grassley noted that the bay door replacements are factored into the MORE grant energy conservation measures.

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

- d. **Code Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to his report and provided the following updates:

- Tenant space one at 559 Penn Avenue has received a building permit and final inspection, which passed. The tenants were given the go-ahead to move in to prepare for the certificate of occupancy inspection.
- A geotechnical report for 55 S. Third Avenue has been received with two recommended courses of action. One was a segmental block retaining wall, referred to as an engineered wall, similar to those around the sides of that structure. The other option was a soil nails and shotcrete-type retaining wall. The owner will need to decide which course of action to take.
- A Zoning Permit has been issued for 508 Penn Avenue. A bookstore will occupy this commercial space, with plans to open in August.

Mayor Kaag shared communications she received from a couple of retail businesses on Penn Avenue regarding Sidewalk Café violations, even though they do not have Sidewalk Café Permits. Mr. Moyer reported that the 16-foot public right-of-way extends from the curbline, for all intents and purposes, up to the building. The Sidewalk Café Ordinance allows restaurants to place tables and chairs within the right-of-way. Mayor Kaag asked whether permits could be issued to retailers to provide outdoor seating and tables, noting that one business had a chess area on the public sidewalk. Mr. Moyer noted that amendments to the ordinance could be considered by the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee. Ms. Drobnick noted that restaurants are making money with this space, while retailers are just creating a community.

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

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

- Mr. Price helped lead the Governor Shapiro tour that announced the Main Street Matters Funding grant.
- Summer flowers have been added to the planters along the avenue.
- The 2nd Friday event was canceled due to a heat advisory and a chance of severe storms.
- A social media coordinator has been hired to handle these duties for the summer, until someone can be hired on a more permanent basis.
- Toured the Legacy Cigar Lounge space that is being divided into three retail spaces. Two of the spaces have been committed to.

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

12. COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mr. Esterly reported that the pool is open for the season with plans underway for the 4th of July weekend. The Playground Program is running well, and tomorrow they will be on a field trip to Skateaway. A Playground Program fundraiser is being finalized with Chef David's for either a large hoagie or a large pizza. The boy and girl who sell the most will win a refurbished bicycle. The following action items were reviewed:

- Consideration was requested to hire a new front desk person and lifeguard at \$10 and \$12 per hour, respectively. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**
- Consideration of accepting a letter of resignation from a member of the Recreation Commission who is moving away. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**
- Consideration of appointing a new member of the Recreation Commission. Israel Arce introduced himself, noting that he is part of a family of five with three children, aged 6 to 16. His crazy schedule has eased, allowing him to spend more time with the children and volunteer with the Recreation Commission.

Motion to appoint Israel Arce to the Recreation Commission with a term to expire on December 31, 2026. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Motion to accept the Recreation Commission report. **Moved** by Ms. Haller Graff and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted some action items coming out of the June meeting centered around stormwater design and standards that include civic space and stormwater mitigation measures. Mr. Moyer noted that regulations are being established to be triggered by redevelopment, allowing higher lot impervious coverages when best management practices for stormwater or civic spaces are implemented. The first action item

would be to prepare a GIS analysis of applicable parcels and impervious coverage. This would identify non-conforming parcels.

Motion to spend \$1,200 for Derck & Edson to develop GIS data for the Stormwater and Civic Space Ordinance changes. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Motion to allow Derck & Edson to facilitate the development of fees, standards, and language for amending ordinances. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mr. Lineaweaver requested consideration for the reappointment of Maria Napoli to the Planning Commission, with a term expiring on December 31, 2028. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Kaag. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Choate reported that the committee discussed residential and business property updates, including a handful of vacancies along Penn Avenue. Avenues for sharing news about vacant storefronts and a business outreach approach were discussed. Business walks are planned to engage with business owners, to identify their needs, and to share resources the borough may have for them.

Motion to accept the Economic Development Committee report. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – The May Environmental Advisory Council meeting had been canceled.
- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Kaag referred to the minutes and noted that we are still waiting on signs from ParkMobile for the 433 Penn Avenue parking lot, Zone Number 73503. Access to the Gage Personnel parking lot from Reading Avenue was revised in response to concerns raised by the owner. Mr. Grassley met with the owner to review the plan, which was well received. Insurance liability is currently being reviewed. Additional parking spaces will be added to the east side of the 200 Block of South Sixth Avenue. Lastly, it was noted that a resident actively protests traffic enforcement in the traffic circle.

Consideration was requested to approve access from the Gage Personnel parking lot to Reading Avenue to create a paid parking program. Mr. Grassley was directed to gather pricing information for this project.

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

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – The June Shade Tree Commission meeting had been canceled.
- g. **Safety Committee** – President Lineaweaver noted the review of electrical safety this month. It was noted that the Administrative Clerk organized this committee meeting, which will be reorganized at the next meeting.

Motion to accept the Safety Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- h. **Finance Committee** – Mr. Lineaweaver noted the review of the sweep account that earned interest at a rate of 3.3328% this past month in comparison to the PLGIT PRIME rate of 3.71%. It was noted that the sweep account offers flexibility. The financial statement was reviewed and discussed, noting grant expenditures that are entered first, followed by reimbursements.

Consideration was requested for the appointment of a new member of the Finance Committee. Nicole Riviuccio introduced herself, noting that she was a finance major in college and had lived in West Reading on and off for roughly 13 years. She recently purchased a home in the borough and wanted to get involved now that she is a permanent resident.

Motion to appoint Nicole Riviuccio to the Finance Committee with a term to expire on December 31, 2026. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

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

13. TREASURER'S REPORT:

- a. **Transfer of Funds** – President Lineaweaver reviewed two action items, noting a transfer of tax revenues into an investment account to earn interest at a higher rate:

- Motion to approve the transfer of \$500,000 from the M&T General Fund to PLGIT PRIME. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**
- Mrs. Rentschler inquired about Borough Council's comfort with transferring either \$2,000,000 or \$1,500,000 to PLGIT TERM. It was unclear if there would be penalties for early withdrawal or how quickly the funds could be accessed. The consensus was to invest the larger amount while remaining diligent in observing the budget.

Motion to approve the transfer of \$2,000,000 from PLGIT PRIME to invest in PLGIT TERM for 365 days at approximately 4.27% interest. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**

- b. **2026 Budget Modification** – The Fifth and Pine Flashing Beacon grant awarded in January had not been included in the 2026 budget. A GL Code is needed to allocate revenue of \$24,500 and an expense of \$35,000.

- Motion to add Fifth and Pine Flashing Beacon Grant C000096376 for \$24,500 revenue, GL Code 01.354.061. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Haller Graff. **Motion carried 5-0.**
- Motion to add Fifth and Pine Flashing Beacon Grant C000096376 for \$35,000 expense, GL Code 01.462.061. The 30% borough match of \$10,500. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mrs. Rentschler referred to the graph of combined cash totals from 2023 through May of 2026, noting annual increases.

- c. **Financial Statement Ending 5/31/2026** – There were no questions or comments.
- d. **Payment Approval Report 5/21/26 to 6/11/26 and 6/12/26 to 6/23/26** – There were no questions or comments.

Motion to approve the financial statement ending 5/31/2026 and Payment Approval Reports of 5/21/26 through 6/23/26. **Moved** by Ms. Drobnick and seconded by Mr. Choate. **Motion carried 5-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers inquired about adding parking spaces along the east side of the 200 Block of South Sixth Avenue. It was noted that authorization to advertise was given this evening, and adoption would take place next month. Mr. Rogers also reported that the Gage Personnel parking lot had been used during the recent Art on the Avenue event; however, the neighboring parking lot for the doctor's office had very few parked cars.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Ms. Drobnick. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary