



Administrative Report Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: Frank Denbowski, Interim Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: August 8, 2022
AGENDA MEMO DATE: August 3, 2022

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- The Community Development Department Director accompanied Mayor Moran to the first public meeting for the Schuylkill River Passenger Railroad Authority. The Mayor is the City representative on the Railroad Authority, and the City's Community Development will assist in the plans to revitalize the Franklin Street area.
- CD's Building and Trades Division developed a construction permit that provides contact information for various trends and specifics for the type of inspection from the initiation project to its completion.
- CD's Building and Trades Division is in the process of updating and preparing several areas of the Building and Code ordinances for Council approval. The update will have the City's ordinance better mirror the Uniform Construction Codes. The UCC requires specific instructions to be implemented within the City's Codes and will aid in providing an improved inspection process and coordination with builders.
- The CD Property Maintenance Division has completed 762 inspections. Of those 762 inspections, 325 residential units passed the 2-year inspection, 437 failed their inspection, and 31 passed after rectifying reported violations.
- The CD Building and Trades Division has received 33 building permit applications (structural, mechanical, electrical, or plumbing). 41 residential inspections and 40 commercial inspections were also completed. The current pass/fail ratio averages 55% to 45%, respectively.
- The CD Zoning Division received 21 new permit applications. 53 permit applications were processed within 30 days, and 19 were processed within 60 days. Zoning also received and addressed 48 complaints.

- CD's Property Maintenance Division has Sweep Officers conducting daily tours within high-density residential areas. The Sweep Officer program is creating better relationships with residents while educating them on quality-of-life issues, encouraging improvements in their neighborhoods, and enforcing current City ordinances pertaining to quality of life when necessary.

FINANCE:

- The Finance Department's CSC provided the following data related to phone calls received:
- The Finance Department's Accounting Division has begun preparations utilizing information from both Munis and USL for the 2023 Budget season.
- The Finance Department has the following updates on the Advancing Health Literacy (AHL) Grant:
 - Hands Across Reading campaign launch occurred on July 19
 - Latino Connection continues to collect surveys; more than 500 have been completed
 - Milestone document revisions are ongoing
 - Staff met with a potential organizational partner occurred on July 14
 - First quarterly report was due to the Office of Mental Health in July 2022
 - Standing project meetings were established with internal and external stakeholders
 - Hiring for the remaining position related to the AHL Grant, Community Engagement Coordinator, is currently in process.
- The Finance Department's Purchasing Division provided the following contract updates:
 - **Recently Awarded:**
 - Pagoda Facility Evaluation Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Structural - STV Engineering
 - 11th and Pike Fencing Project Phase II - Abel Fence, LLC
 - Police Department TSOE Facility - Boyle Construction
 - ADA Changes to Public Works Facility - Bertolet Construction
 - **Current Projects/Upcoming Projects:**
 - Penn Square Properties RFQ - The Review Committee agreed to start negotiations with one of the companies that submitted a proposal. The negotiation team (Solicitor, Finance Director, and Community Development Director) will set up a meeting with company representatives to start the negotiation process.
 - Dumping Abatement RFQ - No bids were received, and a re-bid is anticipated.

- Pest Control Services (Public Works, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Fire Department) – Once Purchasing Division receives completed Recommendation Memos, they will be forwarded to City Council for placement on the agenda.
 - Specific Engineering, Planning, and Zoning Review Services (SEPZ) - The selection committee will review the proposals received.
 - City Wide Fire Station Bay – LED Lighting – Purchasing Division is currently reviewing bids received. Once completed, the Recommendation Memo will be forwarded to City Council for placement on the agenda.
 - Public Works Building Overhead Door Safety Project - Once completed, the Recommendation Memo will be forwarded to City Council for placement on the agenda.
 - School Crossing Guards - Purchasing Division received two bids which will be reviewed and then submitted for placement on the August 8th Council agenda. Advanced notice-to-proceed will be issued to ensure it's in place by the start of the school year.
 - Fire Museum HVAC Engineering Project - Once completed, the Recommendation Memo will be forwarded to City Council for placement on the agenda.
- **Upcoming Projects:**
 - Registering Abandoned Properties for Community Development
 - 3rd and Spruce all abilities playground
 - 3rd and Spruce rehabilitation (design)
 - Line Painting
 - Sidewalk Project for Community Development
 - Reading Skate Park Construction
 - Bid to Collect Debris and Abatement for the Property Maintenance Division
 - 6th and Amity Playground
 - Reading Iron Playground
 - The City Controller is actively preparing the 2023 FY budget
 - The City Controller entered the Fund 50 data into the Munis System. Next, Fund 35, 540791, and 011491, as well as General Fund, property taxes, and EIT, will be entered.

FIRE:

- The Reading Fire Department has received the drone and power saws purchased through the State Firefighters Association. The new equipment is under the care of the Fire Marshal's Office. The power saws are in service, the drone is being set up, and the staff is getting familiar with its capabilities.

- The RFD received 15 AED's through a joint federal grant. The AED's are in service and have replaced the aging units within the department.
- The 9th and Marion Fire Station project continues as scheduled, with an expected completion date of mid-December 2022. Below is a picture of former Councilman Stratton Marmarou signing his name to the final beam set in place on July 15th. The former Councilman was a strong advocate of this project. Also pictured is a progress image of the project and an additional image of the final steel beam dedicated to firefighters who have passed.





HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:

- Since last reported, HRC has:
 - 363 total rent and utility assistance applications were received (An increase of 61 applications since last reported).
 - 269 applications for rental assistance were facing evictions
 - 4 applications were withdrawn by tenants
 - 7 applications were denied due to not meeting the program requirements
 - 15 applicants were not actively facing eviction
 - 5 applicants resided outside of the City but within the County.
 - 57 applications for utility assistance
 - 2 applications were denied for exceeding HUD's income guidelines
 - 3 application was denied due to not meeting program requirements

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- The Human Resource Department would like to welcome the following new employees to the City of Reading organization:
 - Juan Vazquez, PT Public Outreach/Education Coordinator, as of July 25th.
 - Enid Narvaez, Community Engagement Coordinator, as of August 16th.
 - Carmelo Ruiz, Property Maintenance Inspector, as of August 1st.
- On July 16th, the entry written exam for the Police Department was administered. Out of 47 that took the test, 35 passed the exam with a 70% or higher. Applications were due by July 29th, and the physical agility exam will be held on August 13th.

LIBRARY:

- The Reading Public Library created a Library of Things, which will offer a variety of items such as a portable record player, MP3 converter, cordless drill, leaf blower, podcast set, tire inflator, bocce ball set, and ice cream maker. Once the Library Board approves the policy and waiver in September, the Library of Things will be available at each branch.
- The RPL participated in a Community Asset Mapping event hosted by Christ Episcopal Church. The event focused on determining how to utilize their space in partnership with local businesses and organizations to best benefit the community.
- The RPL met with Berks Latino Workforce Development Corporation to discuss potential ways to partner in the future.

PUBLIC WORKS:

- Public Works staff has also completed:
 - 39 sites were cleaned up, which resulted in 85 bags of litter, 25 bags of yard waste, and 35 bulk items
 - 57 televisions from various locations throughout the City
 - 7 dead animals were picked up
 - 282 bags of litter and trash were collected from Penn Street during a total of seven service visits. Public Works discontinued the daily service visits as Downtown Ambassadors are now hired.
 - 72 tires were collected, including 15 that were dumped along West Spring St
- Public Works cleaned 115 storm drains. 23 bags of litter were collected.
- Public Works would like to recognize Steve Harrity, Solid Waste Coordinator, for obtaining his Professional Recycler certification from the Professional Recyclers Association of Pennsylvania (PROP). This certification required 50 hours of classroom training over six days and an examination.
- Public Works Solid Waste Manager prepared the dumpster permit letter for mailing to all dumpster haulers operating in the City.
- Public Works Clean City Coordinator met with WEEU, Alvernia University, Marvel Ranch, and several residents regarding the Adopt-A-Block program.
- Public Works assisted the Finance Director with logistics and set-up for the Act 47 exit celebration.
- Public Works investigated a report of a sinkhole near a catch basin by Screpsi's Sandwich Shop. A catch basin wall was found to be partially broken and is scheduled for repair. A natural sinkhole in the 800 block of Chestnut St was also investigated. The City has it plated and will perform subsurface repairs while awaiting confirmation of required materials. Once materials are confirmed, the repairs will be scheduled and completed.