



# Administrative Report

## Mayor Eddie Moran

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** William M. Heim, Managing Director  
**PREPARED BY:** Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant  
**MEETING DATE:** February 13, 2023  
**AGENDA MEMO DATE:** February 8, 2023

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### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**

- The Community Development Department prepared a questionnaire to gather data on homelessness, shelter availability, and affordable housing within the city. The survey was then distributed to ten sectors that work with this population for feedback. Based on that feedback, an amendment to the allocation plan was advertised with a public hearing held on February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. A resolution will be forthcoming to request City authorization to allocate HOME ARP funds to develop SRO and go towards affordable housing.
- The Community Development Department's HOME program is applying to redirect funds to assist Berks Coalition to End Homelessness.
- The Community Development Department continues to hold weekly progress meetings with the Legacy City's Initiative's core team. The team identified 50 organizations to collaborate with on "Community Conversations" to identify and prioritize public concerns. Meetings will be coordinated and commence in mid-February.
- The Community Development Department is happy to announce that the City of Reading will host the 2023 Pennsylvania Economic Development Association (PEDA) Fall Conference from October 16<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Hotel.
- The Community Development Department's Lead Abatement program has completed the first of three initial lead abatement projects at a residential unit on the 200 block of North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. This is the first property to be abated under the PaDOH grant that was awarded to the City in mid-2021. Two properties are scheduled for cleanup in mid-February.

## **FINANCE:**

- The Finance Department's Citizen's Service Center has the following updates:
  - Staff is working with the Property Maintenance Division to ensure Housing Bills are being prepared and finalized to ensure mailing occurs by March 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - The 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Kiosk/Welcome Desk on the Washington Street side of City Hall is now staffed. Staffing occurred through an AARP program, and Lisa has proved to be an asset, learning quickly with superb customer service skills.
  - The annual City of Reading duplicate parcel record file was received from the County and forwarded to our Information Technology Office to be compared to our records.
- The Finance Department's Purchasing Department provided the following updates:
  - General Engineering Service– Project recently awarded to five engineering firms (Cedarville Engineering Group, Spotts, Stevens, and McCoy, Gannett Fleming, Buchart Horn, McCormick Taylor) to assist with technical specification preparation, project/program development/implementation, and general engineering work.
  - 8<sup>th</sup> and Penn Street Courtyard – The project was re-advertised with bids due November 22, 2022. Three bids were received with costs exceeding the estimated price. The City's CIP Manager is in the process of obtaining signatures.
  - Street Light Poles – Street Light Pole purchase on behalf of Public Works. Proposals can be submitted on the PennBid website by February 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - Routine Tree Pruning, Removals, Stump Grinding, and Emergency Tree Service - Bids can be submitted by February 21st.
  - Plum & Franklin Fire Station HVAC Project - Bids can be submitted by March 4th.
- The City Controller continues work on various items, such as:
  - Fiscal Year 2022 financial audit preparation which is scheduled for the week of February 6th
  - Reviewing accounting matters related to grants such as AHL and HUD Lead Abatement
- The Finance Department provided the following project updates from the Advancing Health Literacy Grant:
  - Dr. Paige Brookins is the City's Health Equity Director, effective February 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Upcoming activities related to the AHL grant are:
    - ECHO Series to begin on February 28<sup>th</sup>
    - Latino Health Summit was announced, and the City of Reading is the host City. The summit will kick off on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel.

## **FIRE:**

- The Reading Fire Department had 10 Probationary Firefighters complete their physical examinations and background checks. They began work with the RFD on February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> & Marion Fire Station construction project is moving forward. Currently, the construction portion of the project has a tentative completion date of March 31<sup>st</sup>. Information will be shared as it is available.
- The Reading Fire Department has partnered with Keystone Blood Bank to sponsor a blood drive on Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, at City Hall from 7:30 am to 3 pm. City employees have already received information on how to register.

## **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:**

- The HRC provided the following year-end report on fair housing, landlord-tenant mediation, and homeless prevention programs:

### Fair Housing

- 131 Walk-ins
- 691 Telephone calls
- 169 cases required action
- 3 Federal Fair Housing Cases were filed

### Homeless Prevention

- 486 Walk-ins
- 677 Telephone calls
- 1161 cases required action

### Landlord/Tenant Mediation

- 57 Walk-ins
- 95 Telephone calls
- 120 cases required action

## **LIBRARY:**

- The Reading Public Library Director attended a 3-day Nonviolent Communication Training (NVC) with various other local organizations.
- RPL's construction of a new Jerome Marcus Meeting room at the Northeast branch continues with an estimated completion date of the end of February 2023.
- The RPL's Makerspace Room is almost complete. Project completion is expected in the next few months.
- RPL is seeking a full-time:
  - One (1) Systems Administrator/Assistant Director
  - Two (2) Librarian II, Bilingual Paraprofessional
  - Upcoming Posting: Archival Scanning Library positions. More to be announced soon.

Anyone interested in applying can visit the Library's website at:

[Employment Opportunities - Reading Public Library](#)

## **POLICE:**

- The Reading Police Department's Community Engagement Officer continues attending events and actively recruiting for written testing scheduled for March 11<sup>th</sup>. He recently donated gun locks to the Salvation Army. He also hosted Hot Cocoa with a Cop at 13<sup>th</sup> & Union Elementary School, Lauer's Park Elementary School, and hosted a meet and greet with the RPD's K-9.
- The RPD's Criminal Investigation and Vice Investigation Divisions have resulted in the seizure of large quantities of illegal narcotics and several firearms.

## **PUBLIC WORKS:**

- Public Works staff has also completed:
  - 42 sites cleaned up, primarily illegal dumping sites, were cleaned up, resulting in 314 bags of trash and litter, 19 bulk items, 88 tires, and 11 televisions.
  - 14 dead animals were picked up.
  - 150 recycling bin deliveries
  - 138 catch basins were checked with 71 needing to be cleared which resulted in 26 bags of debris collected.
  - 6 graffiti abatement projects were completed
- Public Works Clean City Coordinator reports:
  - 1 volunteer cleanup event along Skyline Drive, where 39 volunteers collected 60 bags of litter and 9 bulk items.
  - 3 new Adopt-A-Block participants were registered.
  - Several existing Adopt-A-Block cleanup participants cleaned up their areas, which resulted in 12 bags of trash and litter and 11 bags of yard waste.
- Public Works hosted the Martin Luther King Day of Service with 52 community members from various organizations such as Albright College, Alvernia University, Reading Area Community College, Reading High School, Rotary Club, MP3, and BAMBA.
- Public Works Sustainability Manager Bethany Ayers-Fisher is working with BCTV and MAC to develop a series called "Sustainability & the City," which will focus on the City's efforts around our climate action plan and its implementation. It will also share available resources for residents and businesses.
- Public Works WWTP planned has completed and submitted the following reports:
  - Delaware River Basin Commission Report
  - PA DEP Triennial Laboratory Audit Corrective Action Report
  - December's Discharge Monitoring Report
  - Annual Discharge Monitoring Report