



Administrative Report

Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: William M. Heim, Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: February 27, 2023
AGENDA MEMO DATE: February 22, 2023

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- The Community Development Department held a public hearing where staff presented a summary of the draft allocation plan for Home ARP on February 7th at 7 pm as required by HUD. Several local agencies providing homeless prevention services attended the public hearing. Submission of written public comment was accepted until the end of the day on February 10th. None was received. 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 is holding a public discussion on February 27th at 6 pm at Tec Centro which is located on South 6th Street. The meeting is a collaborative effort of the City of Reading, the Salvation Army, Parks and Recreation, and South of Penn. The purpose of the meeting is to listen to residents' concerns while discussing the South Reading region's cooperative effort to revitalize while engaging local communities.
- 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 met with HDC MidAtlantic and Landis Communities to discuss affordable housing in the City of Reading, focusing on repurposing and revitalizing 201 South 6th Street.

- The Community Development Department continues discussing with the Reading Parking Authority proposed changes to the parking requirement stipulation in the City's Zoning Ordinance. The RPA is seeking a variance for small parking lots.

FINANCE:

- The Finance Department's Accounting Division has the following updates:
 - Staff is preparing to perform the 2022 year-end close process.
 - Staff prepared and mailed all 1099-NEC forms as of February 16th. They are currently working on 1099-MISC and 1099-G forms.
 - The Accounting Manager is working on documentation requests from Maximus Consulting Services related to the City's 2021 annual cost allocation plan.
 - A part-time Accounting Clerk was hired and is now trained to assist with information requests from external auditors during the annual financial audit process.
- The Finance Department's Purchasing Department provided the following updates:
 - 8th and Penn Street Courtyard – The project was awarded to DePaul and Company. The work will consist of brick paving removal and replacement with stamped concrete. Removal and replacement of ramp, trees, grates, and guards. Primer and seal coating concrete walls and steps.
 - Street Light Poles – Street Light Pole purchase proposals were due on the PennBid website on February 15th. One bid was received and rejected. This project will be readvertised with new submissions due on March 27th.
 - Summit Chase Street Lighting - The project includes demolition and replacement of the existing street lighting system, comprising 15 poles and luminaires, 15 foundations and power wiring, backfilling holes, and surface grading; coordinating with Met-Ed for safety issues and older equipment removal. Tree pruning along both sides of streets is also required. Bids are due March 16th.
 - Plum & Franklin Fire Station HVAC Project - Bids must be submitted by March 4th. Five firms attended a pre-bid meeting held on February 14th.
 - Reading Skateboard Park – The project is for a new skateboard park. Bids are due on February 28th. Five firms attended a pre-bid meeting held on February 7th.
- The Finance Department's Grants Division provided the following updates:
 - Alvernia University Collegetowne Infrastructure and Renovation - Cooperation Agreement was submitted to Alvernia officials for signatures on February 14th.
 - Penn Street South Courtyard Improvement Projects – A one-year extension was granted through June 30th, 2024, and work is progressing.
 - Advancing Health Literacy – A no-cost extension application is due to the City's internal team by April 7th, before the final external submission on May 1st.

- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure – Sustainability Manager is working with Grants Coordinator on this application. Weekly boot camp sessions are being attended, an internal team meeting is scheduled for March 8th, and a community meeting will be held soon.

FIRE:

- The Reading Fire Department has 10 Probationary Firefighters that began EMT training.
- The 9th & Marion Fire Station construction project continues moving forward. Currently, the construction portion of the project has a tentative completion date of March 31st. 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 7th, at City Hall from 7:30 am to 3 pm. City employees have already received information on how to register. Pre-registration is recommended.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:

- The HRC provided the following update:
 - The rate of rental application submissions has slowed down, with most tenants coming in with security deposit/first month's rent requests—both of which we cannot cover.
 - To date, the HRC has received a total of 55 rental & utility assistance applications. Of those applications:
 - 1 application is for utility assistance
 - 8 applications have no eviction
 - 1 application was out of the city
 - 3 applications were disqualified

LIBRARY:

- The Reading Public Library offered “Talk to a Therapist” program on February 21st from 3-5 pm. This program allows families to talk to therapists from Right Start Children's Services for free early intervention services for children from birth to age three.
- The RPL is proud to announce the launch of a new website. We hope the new site will be easier to navigate. We encourage everyone to check it out:
<https://readingpubliclibrary.org/>
- RPL is still seeking a full-time:
 - One (1) Systems Administrator/Assistant Director
 - Two (2) Librarian II,
 - One (1) Bilingual Paraprofessional

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 various recruitment events to prepare for the March 11th entry-level test. He has visited numerous colleges, universities, police academies, and career fairs in eastern Pennsylvania, with more planned in the upcoming months.

Sergeant and Lieutenant promotional tests will be administered in August 2023.

The Engagement Officer also attends various community engagement events at schools and with non-profit organizations to help address youth violence.

- The RPD's Neighborhood Gun Violence Unit's initial detail resulted in two arrests. Criminal and Vice Investigators are assisting with follow-up on intelligence that developed into gun violence incidents.

Additional details are being planned.

PUBLIC WORKS:

- Public Works staff has also completed:
 - 56 sites cleaned up, primarily illegal dumping sites, were cleaned up, resulting in 317 bags of trash and litter, 78 bulk items, 45 tires, and 41 televisions.
 - 17 dead animals were picked up.
 - 150 recycling bin deliveries
 - 132 catch basins were checked with 73 needing to be cleared which resulted in 33 bags of debris collected.
 - 31 graffiti abatement projects were completed
- Public Works Clean City Coordinator reports:
 - 2 new Adopt-A-Block participants were registered.
 - Several existing Adopt-A-Block cleanup participants cleaned up their areas, which resulted in 14 bags of trash and litter and 3 bags of yard waste.
- Public Work's Solid Waste and Recycling Manager hosted the first planning meeting for the Great American Cleanup on April 22nd. So far, 255 volunteers have been recruited to participate in this year's event.
- Public Works submitted an application and received letters of commitment from the US Department of Transportation for the Thriving Communities Program.
- Public Works WWTP is participating in the Cooperative Outreach Program with Reading and Albright College. Currently, two high school students work at the facility two days a week, learning hands-on about the industry to complement the in-class education they receive the rest of the week. The program's intent is to introduce young people to the water utility industry and encourage others to consider this career path.