



Administrative Report

Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: William M. Heim, Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: March 13, 2023
AGENDA MEMO DATE: March 7, 2023

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- The Community Development Department's Property Maintenance Division is happy to report that 38 properties were removed from the certified blighted properties list as they have passed inspections, restored utilities, and are current on real estate taxes. In addition, 15 properties have passed inspection; however, utilities or real estate taxes are not paid to date. The Property Maintenance Division is researching how to resolve these outstanding balance issues.
- The Community Development Department was awarded a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes grant in the amount of \$1.3 million. This funding will support the City's program focused on abating health hazards for elderly owner-occupied properties. The program starts in June 2023 and will run for 42 months
- The Community Development Department submitted its HOME ALLOCATION Plan as part of HOME American Rescue Plan on Monday, Feb 28th. CD is seeking approval of \$3.5M for affordable housing. When H.U.D. approves the allocation plan as submitted or with amendment, the City will have to advertise to receive applications for affordable housing. Community Development will manage this program for the following 20 years.
- The Community Development Department met with a consortium that included representatives from Senator Schwenk, Representative Rozzi and Representative Cepeda-Freytiz's office. The G.R.C.A., Our City of Reading, Helping Harvest, D.C.E.D.'s Ms. Fadia Halma, and City staff also were in attendance. The meeting addressed Federal and State grant opportunities. The next meeting is scheduled for early April.

- The Community Development Department’s Zoning Division resolved all outstanding enforcement for 2022 and the current year (2023). Staff successfully resolved 196 out of the 428 outstanding enforcements from 2022 and resolved 28 enforcement from 2023.

FINANCE:

- The Finance Department’s I.T. Division has the following updates:
 - Staff is preparing to facilitate fiber service installations to remote City fire station sites.
 - Work continues on the Public Works facility server site. The latest advancement is electrical service has been installed for the new A.C. unit servicing this site.
 - Staff continues to work on the Endpoint Detection and Response (EDr) system.
- The Finance Department’s Citizens Service Center has the following updates:
 - Staff is preparing for Tyler Technologies system conversion related to the point of sale (P.O.S.) equipment. Once cashiering software is upgraded, new credit card processors will be installed.
 - New ownership updates received from the County in January contained some incorrect mailing address information for new owners. C.S.C. staff is working with the City’s I.T. Division to extract necessary information from a corrected file version.
- The Finance Department’s Accounting Division has the following updates:
 - Staff is working alongside Purchasing Division staff to complete all necessary 2022 year-end checklist tasks affecting Munis's purchase order and contract functions.
 - Staff prepared and mailed additional 1099-NEC forms on February 23rd.
- The Finance Department’s Purchasing Department provided the following updates:
 - 275th Commemorative City of Reading Book – This project was advertised and proposals are due March 20th.
 - 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.
 - A.R.L.E Project -The project will re-time 52 traffic signals within the downtown traffic signal network and provide new software and dedicated laptop computers to monitor the signal network operation. The pre-bid meeting is scheduled for March 14th, with bids due on March 29th.
- The Finance Department’s Grants Division provided the following updates:
 - Reading Iron Playground – A project kick-off meeting was held on February 28th.
 - Engelmann’s Lower Dam Modification – A grant extension request was submitted on February 24th.

- Buttonwood Gateway – A grant extension request was submitted on February 28th.
- Healthy Homes Production Grant Program – A team meeting was held on March 1st.
- The Finance Department’s Advancing Health Literacy (A.H.L.) Grant provided the following updates:
 - The ECHO webinar series was launched on February 28th
 - 16 individuals received vaccinations during the CATE clinic that was held on February 16th.
 - Focus group planning continues with the development of organizational and misinformation tool kits.
 - Upcoming A.H.L. events:
 - Women’s First Event – March 25, 2023
 - Latino Health Summit – April 6-8, 2023
- The Finance Department’s Capital Projects Manager provided the following update:
 - The following projects have reached the design engineering stage. Progress will continue once the engineering services contract recently awarded by City Council is finalized:
 - Northwest Library Ceiling Repairs and Circulation Desk
 - William Penn Fire Tower – 2023 Ventilation and Mortar
 - Camp Lilly
 - 800 Block of Penn Courtyard 3rd and Court Sidewalk
 - Plum and Franklin Fire Station Sidewalk
 - Cedar Lot Paving
 - Public Works Paving
 - Evidence/Police Department Basement Retro-fit

FIRE:

- The Reading Fire Department has appointed 3 “Acting” roles due to the impending retirement of Deputy Chief Stuart Basner.
- The R.F.D.’s two new fire engines are in production with projected delivery at the end of April. The two engines were purchased with 2022 CDBG funding.

LIBRARY:

- The Reading Public Library and its staff were recognized at the BCPL Awards Ceremony. The following awards were received:
 - Outstanding Library Staff Member Award – Linda Capozello
 - Dreisbach Award for Exemplary Service to Berks County Libraries – Mike Najarian
 - Chet Hagan Memorial Public Relations Award – Reading Public Library

- The RPL is happy to announce that they have filled the Digital Preservation Intern position to support the Digitization of the PA Room project. The scanner will be assembled on March 13th, and staff will be trained to use the device.

Thank you to the City of Reading for their support through ARPA funding.

- R.P.L. 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](#)

- The RPL is happy to announce that the Jerome Marcus Meeting Room construction at the Northeast Branch is complete. Furniture delivery is pending. Once received, a dedication/open house will be scheduled.
- The RPL has partnered with the Goggleworks, Reading Film Office, Exeter Library, Albert & Eunice Boscov Theatre, and Wyomissing Public Library for a special Death Café on Monday, March 27th at 7pm. This is a free community event where two films will be shown, with a discussion and refreshments to follow.

POLICE:

- The Reading Police Department's Youth Academy has continued to successful training sessions with a core group of 20-25 cadets.
- The RPD's Community Engagement Officer has coordinated 11 recruiting events in the past few weeks.
- The RPD Police Academy provided interested candidates an opportunity to take a practice PT test.

PUBLIC WORKS:

- Public Works staff has also completed:
 - 41 sites cleaned up, primarily illegal dumping sites, were cleaned up, resulting in 254 bags of trash and litter, 33 bulk items, 21 tires, and 24 televisions.
 - 8 dead animals were picked up.
 - 50 recycling bin deliveries
 - 136 catch basins were checked with 75 needing to be cleared which resulted in 14 bags of debris collected.
- Public Works Clean City Coordinator reports:
 - 3 new Adopt-A-Block participants were registered.

- An Adopt-A-Block cleanup participant cleaned up their area, which resulted in 8 bags of trash and litter.
- Attended the Keep America Beautiful Conference in Washington DC from February 20th - 23rd.
- Public Work's Solid Waste and Recycling Manager attended a Berks Crime Alert event on February 15th and successfully enlisted the organization to assist with illegal dumping issues.
- Public Work's Solid Waste and Recycling Manager organized and facilitated a Great American Clean-up planning session with staff on February 16th.
- Public Works Sustainability Manger attended the Keep America Beautiful Conference in Washington DC on February 20th - 23rd. While there working on the affiliation with either KAB (national) or Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.