

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

The managing director highlighted the mayor's activities since the last meeting and the report distributed electronically last Friday and copied in below.

TO: City Council

FROM: William M. Heim, Managing Director

PREPARED BY: William M. Heim, Managing Director

MEETING DATE: April 10, 2023

AGENDA MEMO DATE: April 7, 2023

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

☑ The Community Development Department has the following updates:

☑ Albright College will be presenting at City Council a proposed change to the traffic pattern on 12th St. The changes are focused on creating one way direct traffic from Richmond Street to Exeter Street. The revised traffic pattern will allow more student parking. The City is requesting a confirmation from neighboring industries of their consent to proposed traffic changes.

☑ Represented Mayor Moran in the Community Funding Project grants reviews. This is an annual task coordinated by Congresswoman Chrissie Houlahan's office. The 2024 grant opportunities included 38 applications competing to receive allotment of earmarked \$10.0million to Berks and Chester County. Houlahan's office with the help of the review committee will submit 15-20 applications to the appropriation Committee. The results will be published by the second week of April.

☑ Effort for Legacy Cities program continues to increase gaining more locals attention. Mayor Moran attending a meeting with Barrio Alegria civic group at Tec Centro to address equality and equity in the south of Penn area. The meeting was attended by residents in the area who shared their concerns about quality of housing, cost of rent, weekend entertainments, parking, children health and safety etc. Follow up community meetings will take as part the Legacy City program.

☑ Applied to a Housing Stabilization grant through Senators Casey and Fetterman offices. The grant application included draft strategy on acquisition, stabilization and the processing of blighted properties. The grant when awarded is \$2.0 million starting 2024.

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☐ Coordinating with Berks County Redevelopment Authority regarding the whole home repair program (WHRP). It is projected the City will receive \$2.0 million from County/DCED to assist homeowners and small landlord to repair residential dwellings. More details in May or June.

☑ A motion to amend the 2023 HUD Action Plan and to present the amendment before city council in early April. The motion calls to consolidate specific funding freeing \$1.0 million to support the construction of a community center at Oakbrook homes located in district one. The Project is part of community revitalization planned by Reading Housing Authority.

☑ Coordinated a meeting with equitable owner of 601 Penn St. The Developer revised original plans to build a 196 market rate apartments. An application was submitted for the zoning hearing board seeking relief(s) from various stipulations under section 600-1102 High Rise Apartment.

☑ Code Services Department (PMI) completed 264 Quality of Life (QoL) complaints during the past two weeks. The majority of QoL citations are attributed to trash accumulation.

☑ Historic Preservation office received 8 applications for certificate of appropriateness (COA), reviewed, processed and approved 7 applications. In addition, conducted 38 site visits meeting with property owners, verifying progress of construction works and compliance to HARB approvals.

☑ Zoning received 37 applications in the last two weeks, processed and approved 29. However, 100 applications remain on hold awaiting additional information from perspective Applicants. Total number of applications on hold for over past 60 days is 39.

☑ Lead Hazard control unit received 39 referral applications, completed 33 intake cases, visited 27 properties and prepared risk assessment reports for 17 properties.

☑ Mr. John Stine will join Building and Trades on April 3rd. John has over three decades of experience as Mechanical contractor and Inspector.

FINANCE:

☑ The Finance Department's IT Division has the following updates:

☑ CSC Update

- The CSC Manager, Maria Kantner is reviewing a "Permitting, Planning and Business Licensing Guide" drafted by the City's Planning Consultant which once completed will provide valuable information to assist customers of the Citizen's Service Center.
- It was determined that due to changing postal regulations, the City will need to research and acquire postage metering equipment which utilizes Intelligent Mail Indicia (IMI) technology and budget for the purchase in fiscal year 2025.
- To prevent delays in addressing sewer back up issues reported to the CSC, staff has changed their procedure and begun adding an email to the sewer back up service request type to communicate directly with the sewer team vehicle immediately upon receipt of the report.
- The CSC Manager attended the Berks Income Tax Collection Committee meeting held on March 30, 2023.

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☐ Accounting Update

- The Accounting Manager is identifying Project and General Ledger reports to provide to the City Controller and the external auditors for their work on the City's financial audit.
- The Accounting Manager is working to provide necessary access to the City's new Grants Coordinator in the grant manager modules of the Munis accounting system.
- The Accounting Manager met with the Public Works Property Manager, Carlos Torres to facilitate completing certain Maximus activity reporting necessary in conjunction with finishing the 2021 cost allocation project.
- The Accounting Manager is reviewing resumes of Penn State intern candidates.

☑ Grants Update

- A no cost extension request will be submitted ahead of the May 1st deadline with information to be provided by the Advancing Health Literacy (AHL) team.
- Work on the City's application for a Charging & Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) grant is progressing. A community meeting in April is in the planning stages and requests for letters of support have been sent to the appropriate legislators. Discussions regarding a partnership with RACC are also taking place.

- Mineral Springs Park has been identified as the focus of a planned DCED Multimodal Transportation Fund application.
- A meeting was held between City staff and representatives of the WCR Center of the Arts regarding possible funding sources for a construction project. In the absence of ARPA funding, potential CDBG funding was discussed as well as ways the City can offer technical or other support.

🔗 Purchasing Update

Recently Awarded

- **Skateboard Park** - Awarded to Land-Tech Enterprises of Warrington, PA in the amount of \$744,890.00
- **Willow Creek Dam Removal** - Awarded to Flyway Excavating of Mt. Joy, PA in the amount of \$64,700.00.
- **Plum and Franklin Street Fire House HVAC Project** - Awarded to The Warko Group, Reading, PA in the amount of \$340,331.00.

Current Projects

- **19th Ward Pumping Station**

This project is for the delivery of engineering services for the design, permitting, preparation of plans and technical specifications including final contract documents for bidding, bid phase services and design services during construction associated with the new 19th Ward Pump Station. Bids were received on 3/29 from each of the five companies approved via the RFQ process. A selection committee is currently reviewing the responses and interviews will be conducted with two selected companies. Page 4 of 8

- **Street Light Poles**

This project is for the purchase of Street light poles by the Public Works (PW) division. Two bids were received and the Bid Schedule and Recommendation Memo have been provided to the Acting PW Director for completion.

- **Buttonwood Gateway Improvements Project – Phase 1 – Sanitary/Storm Sewer Rehabilitations**

This project provides for the installation of sanitary and storm sewer improvements. As two bids were received that exceeded the budget estimate, a re-bid is planned.

- **275th Commemorative City of Reading Book**

Only one proposal was received for this project which has been rejected. A re-bid is planned.

- **Summit Chase Street Lighting**

Four bids were received on March 22, 2023. A Recommendation Memo and Bid Schedule were forwarded to Public Works division staff for completion.

- **Laboratory Services for the WWTP**

This bid will seek a vendor to conduct laboratory analysis for the parameters that are required by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit beyond the wet chemistry that is performed routinely in house to maintain plant compliance. This analysis includes, but is not limited to, pesticides, semi-volatiles, volatiles, organics, whole effluent toxicity, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) and metals. The proposals are due on April 5, 2023.

- ☒ **Controller Update**

- City Controller, Michael Oppenheimer continues working with members of the Accounting department staff preparing for the 2022 fiscal year external audit.

- ☒ **Project Manager (ERP System)**

No Report

- ☒ **Advancing Health Literacy (AHL) Grant**

- The second ECHO series webinar was held on March 14th and included 107 participants.
- A media campaign which includes billboard creation is in process.
- A videographer has been selected to work on the misinformation toolkit.
- Additional touchpoints were made with community organizations and elected officials.
- Upcoming events include the Latino Health Summit from April 6th through the 8th.

- ☒ **Capital Projects**

- The Plum and Franklin fire station roof install was recently completed.
- Progress on several paving related projects including the Cedar Street and Public Works facility parking lots is pending finalization of the bulk engineering contract with McCormick Taylor by the Legal Department.

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- An expected completion date of May 8, 2023 for City Park playground currently under construction by Empire Services was established.

FIRE:

- ☑ Attended the PELRAS conference in State College which was informative.
- ☑ After meeting with yourself and Finance director Jamar Kelly signed the agreement for the purchase of a New rescue Truck. Will be looking at CDBG and CIP for funding of a Tiller Ladder and Engine in the future as per our conversation.

☑ 9th and Marion Station – Slow progress. Tentative completion is now June 9, 2023

☑ Production on the 2 new Engines purchased last year through CDBG is progressing. Delivery is slated for early May 2023

HUMAN RESOURCES:

☑ The Human Resource Department reports progress on the status of driver training which will be presented to City council in late April.

☑ An exit interview process has been established

☑ An onboarding orientation has been created.

LIBRARY:

☑ 1200 children, teens, and parents visited the Main library's children's department in March.

☑ 102 people attended a Death Café event on March 27 held at the Goggleworks that RPL worked on in partnership with Exeter Library, Goggleworks, Reading Film Office, Albert & Eunice Boscov Theatre, and Wyomissing Public Library.

☑ Filling vacant positions: Systems Admin/Assistant Director position; two open Librarian II positions.

☑ HVAC/generator project is on-going. Awaiting decision about location of gas line.

☑ Working on an RFP for evaluating our bank, as directed by the board.

☑ Working on the District Negotiated Contract.

☑ Working with Harwood Institutes "Moving Reading Forward Together Initiative"

☑ We hired a temporary full-time Digital Literacy Instructor/Digital Navigator for the ARPA funded telemedicine and digital divide project. He will be starting on April 18th.

POLICE: Page 6 of 8

☐ The Reading Police Department provided assistance to the West Reading Police Department during the explosion at RM Palmer and during the past week. Special thanks to IT Manager Ken Cochran for responding to the scene to assist with a computer issue in the command vehicle.

☒ LT Lillis and SGT Fegely continue to assist with the Homeless Coalition activities throughout the city.

☒ MDT Replacement and CI Tablets: All purchases were approved and equipment ordered. SGT Lonsinger continues to coordinate with IT and both projects remain on schedule.

☒ Investigations Office Renovations: Flooring contractor has been selected. We are waiting on quotes from three co-starts vendors who toured the space and are creating proposals.

☒ 2023 Vehicle Purchase: Two training motorcycles are being purchased with vehicle funds. These motorcycles will allow us to conduct in-house training and certification of motor officers with our instructor (OFF Trythall).

☒ SGT Bradley McClure was assigned as the TLEU Sergeant.

☒ LT Nicholas Epolito was selected to supervise the FTO program (collateral duty) to replace SGT McClure due to his transfer to traffic.

PUBLIC WORKS:

☒ Completed this reporting period: Plum and Franklin Roof.

☒ Solid Waste/Recycling Division Manager delivered a presentation on drafting and implementing local recycling ordinances at the PA. Professional Recyclers Assn. (PROP) conference in Lancaster on 3/22/2023.

☒ Sustainability Manger Meetings Attended: Steering Committee for Keep Reading Beautiful (KRB), Legacy City Cohort meetings, Water Alliance DRB cohort meeting, Grant workgroup meetings, Angelica Creek Watershed Association, Schuylkill River Watershed Congress, Legacy Cities Community Conversation, EAC Communication Committee, EAC Monthly, Urban Ag workgroup, South of Penn Task Force.

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II. ONGOING PROJECTS

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☐ Clean City Team (City Staff) completed 40 clean- up and illegal dumping projects picking up 232 bags of litter and 18 bulk items. Staff picked up 25 tires and 41 TV's. 8 dead animals were removed from the streets and 150 recycling bins delivered. Clean City Program instituted "Gateway Tuesday" where weather permitting all gateways to the City and the surrounding area checked and cleaned as needed every Tuesday going forward.

☒ Clean City Coordinator Ryan Bradley's "Adopt-A Block" participants cleaned up 12 bags of litter and 4 bags of yard waste. 7 "Adopt A Block" signs were installed, Ryan also had the 500 Block of N 5th St. cleaned of 2 bags of litter with volunteers and facilitated the Inaugural meeting for the Keep Reading Beautiful Steering Committee and participated in Sustainability Instruction at the RAKK RSD Facility.

- ☒ Pending on notification of McCormick Taylor bulk engineering contract for paving related project consideration, last known legal was working through it.
- ☒ City Park playground- under construction Empire Services- Contract end date is 12/31/22- issued a letter of notice of violation- final completion expected May 8, 2023.
- ☒ Cedar Lot Paving- \$150,000 soft quote needs engineering awaiting design engineering contract to begin.
- ☒ PW Paving- \$150,000 soft quote needs engineering contracts awaiting design engineering contract to begin.
- ☒ Operation Splinter- continue- PW needs lighting worked on to continue electrical and plumbing.
- ☒ River Road Extension – The Contractor is completing the curb and sidewalk work and preparing to start paving in April.
- ☒ 2022 Paving Project – Curb ramp designs are progressing and field work on the ramps has restarted. The manhole adjustments will start in April.
- ☒ 2023 Paving Project, Contract No. 1 – Bid was advertised on 3/13/23, pre-bid meeting was 3/21/23 and bids to open on 4/17/23. The Solicitor and PW are working to have a contract executed to start work in May/June.
- ☒ Liggett Ave/Hancock Blvd. Intersection – SSM and city and stakeholders reviewed the Final Plan. SSM to finish the drawings and specs for bidding in April. This will be bid with 2 contracts; one for storm sewer and one for paving. Anticipated total cost is \$2-\$3M.
- ☒ ARLE Downtown Traffic Signal Retiming – The pre-bid meeting was held on 3/14/23 with no contractors in attendance, but PennBid indicates there are interested bidders. Purchasing will issue special email notices to the contractors who would be interested to encourage them to bid. Bid opening was pushed back to 4/7/23 due to delayed PA wage determination issuance.
- ☒ Summit Chase Lighting – Bids were opened on 3/22/23, 4 bids received. The apparent low bid is within budget. We expect an award in April and construction a start in May.
- ☒ Castlewood Street Dedication – Cedarville is on-site conducting the assessment of the stormwater management system. This assessment report will help the city determine the conditions for the streets/stormwater dedication.
- ☒ Reading 275 Tree Planting, April 22nd, 11 am City Park (in planning) would like to have dignitaries attend/ participate. Please email me to sign up or suggest invitees. Vendor tables are available at Earth Day for all City departments and programs at no cost. Please email me to sign up.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- ☒ Alvernia Sustainability Conference: April 19.
- ☒ Great American Clean Up: April 22.
- ☒ Earth Day Berks: April 22, City Park.
- ☒ PSTATS conference presenter with Master Watershed Stewards April 24.
- ☒ We Conserve PA, Plenary Breakfast: April 27, 9am (Please email me for ticket).
- ☒ Good Medicine Indigenous Wellness Celebration: June 3rd, Riverfront Park (10am).