



Administrative Report

Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: William M. Heim, Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Kenya S. Edmonds, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: May 22, 2023
AGENDA MEMO DATE: May 17, 2023

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

The Community Development Department has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS For the period starting April 3rd, throughout April 14th.

- The following tasks are completed through various divisions within Community Development.
 - Community Development finalized discussions with HUD's representative for Healthy Home grant. The grant was awarded earlier this year for \$1.3 million. The result detailed the process of implementation over the next 42 months. Additional staffing to coordinate daily tasks will be required to properly administer the program once it is in place.
 - Met with Southeast Regional Assistant with the office of the Governor. The meeting focused on establishing additional opportunities for the revitalization of the City. Among the requests made is to expedite the delivery of an approved \$3.6 million whole home repair program to Berks County. When awarded, the City will be a sub-recipient of \$2.0 million. In addition, the City requested additional Housing Options Grant Program-Multi-family (HOP-MF), PHFA. The deadline to apply is May 19 for affordable housing. CD will take the lead completing online application.
 - EnerGov training for CD staff enters the train-the-trainer's phase which requires allocation of more manpower for adequate training. Confidence level for going live is reasonable for handling Zoning and Planning applications. Whereas Building and Trade lags in finalizing the configuration process. This step is mandatory before commencing train the trainer phase. As for Property Maintenance, the largest user of this new software, they have successfully completed tasks configuration for all 30 individual operations. However, rental

unit auto scheduler remains unsolved. Auto-scheduler is imperative for scheduling 20,000 rental apartments based on availability of manpower and annual inspection rota.

- City Staff met with GRCA, Berks County Planning, and Community Foundations to discuss the next steps for initiating a zoning overlay known as Transient Oriented District (TOD). GRCA received a DCED grant to assist in developing preliminary zoning overlay addressing the upcoming improvements within the downtown district. The study will take into consideration possible locations for passengers' rail stations.
- Met with DCED regional Director to inquire about Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) funds. When awarded the grant, CD will be used for developing a City-wide comprehensive plan. The revised Com plan will replace the current plan which was approved by the City Council in 2000. The Comp Plan will be instrumental in revising Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances. Application will be submitted late May.
- Property Maintenance division, completed 132 quality of life inspections/citation, scheduled 64 health, fire and safety inspections, 203 residential inspections for 2-year or property transfer, 3 court appearances and issued 14 notices of violations.
- Building and Trade received 34 permit applications, two sets of full plans (architectural, MEP), completed reviewing 4 plan reviews, approved 6 plans, issued 40 building permits for various contraction tasks, and approved 4 cases of utilities restorations. Building and trade Inspectors approved 67 inspections and denied 8 inspections.
- Historic preservation Specialist, received 3 applications of completion of appropriateness (COA), approved 1 application, issued 1 building permits, and supported 15 City residents with their applications whom requesting a modification to exterior of residential or commercial façade.

FINANCE:

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **IT Update**

- IT staff participated in EnerGov Train the Trainer sessions.
- Recently on-boarded Tyler Support Specialist position, employee is receiving training in that new role.
- The fiber optic installation was completed serving the Public Works facility. Continuation will focus on City Hall, followed by City remote sites.
- New firewalls are being configured and installed to serve the Fire stations.
- A replacement backup firewall for City Hall will be installed by 5/12/23.
- The Microsoft 365 roll out to City staff has begun.

- **CSC Update**

Keystone Collections/Business Privilege Tax

- In conjunction with the upcoming conversion to the EnerGov system, it is anticipated that new business applications will be submitted to Keystone monthly for processing. Research and inquiries directed to Keystone have resulted in securing a spreadsheet containing the

mandatory fields for set up. This information was provided for inclusion in the configuration process.

Hansen to EnerGov Data Conversion

- The CSC Manager has been working with IT Division staff to devise solutions to areas of concern resulting from the data conversion process and were identified by various City Departments as part of the Energov vs. Hansen systems testing and comparison process.

EnerGov

- The following outstanding items have been identified and are without complete resolution at this time:
 - Export of data to Keystone or any other collector for current new business privilege tax set-up
 - Export of delinquent fees to ARB or any other collector for delinquencies, data, and fee collections
 - Import of collection receipts (this will involve several offices)
 - Batch processing for Business Privilege License and Housing bills, trade license renewals, health permits, etc.

Accounting Update

- The Q1-2023 School Crossing Guard services invoice in the amount of \$89,871.67 was issued.
- The Accounting Manager researched and responded to inquiries and document requests from the City's external auditors.
- A few upcoming projects were identified for the Accounting Department intern recently hired for the summer of 2023.
- An internal Munis system payment processing manual for new employees is in the final stages of drafting.
- Accounting staff are preparing to monitor the financial workflow during the upcoming vacancy for the Grants Coordinator position.

Grants Update

Strategic Management Plan

- Submission to PA DCED will occur on 5/19/2023.

Advancing Health Literacy

- The No Cost Extension application has been drafted and budget items are being finalized.

Charging Fueling Infrastructure

- The application is due on May 31, 2023.
- A general community meeting was held on 5/9/2023 and a business community meeting is scheduled for 5/17.
- Receipt of letters of support from pertinent legislators and MetEd are pending.
- Valuations are needed of in-kind land and salary cost share contributions.

DCED Multimodal

- An application is planned for submission by 7/31 to address the Skyline Drive area.

• Purchasing Update

Recently Awarded

- 19th Ward Pumping Station to Entech Engineering, Reading, PA, in the amount of \$767,066.
- 2023 Roads Program Project to Allan Myers, LP, Worcester, PA in the amount of \$4,903,555.

Current Projects

- 2022/2023 Sidewalk Replacement and Public Sidewalk Replacement Program
- The awarded contractor shall be awarded a two-year contract to perform the sidewalk and/or curb removal and reinstallation. A list of local contractors was provided by the CD Director. It is anticipated that this project will be advertised shortly.
- Camp Lily
- This bid will provide for the complete demolition of the existing sidewalk, railing and wooden landing, ramp and railings indicated or as required in preparation for alterations and construction of a new concrete ramp and sidewalk with new railings. Bids are due on June 6, 2023.

• Controller Update

- 100% of the time is focused on external audit.

• Advancing Health Literacy (AHL) Grant

- Year 1 media campaign underway, highlighting details of grant milestones and directing to new website/landing page for resources about COVID-19, vaccination, etc. Based on that campaign, we can claim some early success as according to the analytics, it is the 2nd highest viewed page on our website out of 2700 pages.

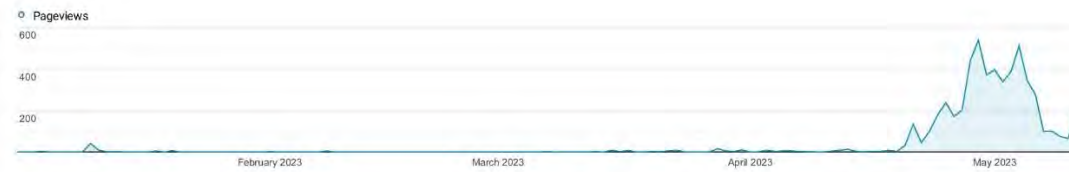
Pages

ALL » PAGE: /my-health

Jan 1, 2023 - May 11, 2023

All Users
2.16% Pageviews

Explorer



Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit	Page Value
	5,412 % of Total: 2.16% (250,339)	4,679 % of Total: 2.97% (181,776)	00:03:51 Avg for View: 00:11:8 (194.06%)	4,633 % of Total: 4.68% (98,974)	88.93% Avg for View: 89.72% (48.08%)	84.89% Avg for View: 89.54% (114.65%)	\$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (\$0.00)
1. /my-health	5,412 (100.00%)	4,679 (100.00%)	00:03:51	4,633 (100.00%)	88.93%	84.89%	\$0.00 (0.00%)

- **Capital Projects**

- **8th and Court Boiler System**

- While under construction by Blanski Energy Services, a possible conflict with structural damage was identified. The HVAC contractor is on board to delay work if necessary.

- **Radio Booster Project**

- An award was made to Berkshire Systems and the contract is currently pending with the Legal Department.

- **City Park Playground**

- The project is under construction by Empire Services with a contracted completion date of 12/31/22. A notice of violation was issued to the contractor and final completion is expected by May 19, 2023.

- **Reading Skate Park**

- The contract with Land Tech has been completed and the contract with Grindline is currently pending with the Legal Department.

- **Baer Park Lighting**

- Funding is needed for the project and an update is pending from a potential source.

- **Egelman's Dam**

- The ECS drilling was completed. Bog turtle hazard and State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) cultural importance have been identified. Research is ongoing.

- **Police Department Evidence Storage Area**

- Lighting repairs are needed for Public Works staff to continue the electrical and plumbing work. An additional plumbing leak in the first-floor bathroom has seeped water into this area.

- **Reading Public Library HVAC**

- Alan Shuman has expressed interest in cost-sharing. The presence of lead is back in the discussion and a change order is pending. A project close-out meeting was held on 4/27.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- EnerGov – Go-live is scheduled for June 6, 2023. At that time, we stopped entering permit and licensing data in Hansen and exclusively operate in the Energov module of MUNIS. Once we go live, we will then begin to remove access to Hansen for most current users. This slightly aggressive approach is needed to force legacy staff to embrace the new system. We have had significant difficulties getting our subject matter experts to own their role in the new system so this approach is needed. I expect to get pushback and consternation from a few people, but it is a part of the growing pains as we modernize our systems.

DECISION MAKING

- Considering a proposal from IAFF local to offer annual cancer screenings for active-duty members. Our health insurance broker has priced two quotes to compare with the one from the union and that seems the most optimal so far. If agreed, we will ultimately codify in an MOU that will be folded into the next contract.

FIRE:

The Fire Department has the following updates:

Accomplishments:

- The new EMS chase unit went into service on Thursday May 11. This is manned by the EMS shift Lieutenant and covers some of the low-level calls as well as allowing the Lieutenant to complete required paperwork.

ONGOING PROJECTS:

- 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. Four of our members will be going to the factory in Appleton, Wisconsin on May 20 for final inspection of both apparatuses.
- The EVT mechanic position was advertised this week on the City website as well as Indeed. Hopefully, we will have some qualified applicants soon.

DECISION MAKING

- Two minor discipline issues were handled in my office. No grievances were filed.

Library:

The Library has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Staff answered 11,876 Reference Questions in April.
- One of our virtual Children's Story Time Videos "Zap, Clap, Boom! The Story of a Thunderstorm" went a little "viral" on YouTube receiving over 7400 views in four days.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- Filling vacant positions: We have filled one of the two open Librarian II positions. I will be taking action soon regarding the other Librarian II position and the open Assistant Director position.
- HVAC/generator project is ongoing but seems to be making good strides towards completion.
- RFP for evaluating our bank has been made public. We are waiting for proposals.
- Still working on getting hotspots ready to circulate to patrons and getting hotspots and iPads ready for the Digital Literacy Instructor project. We hope to have these ready for the public in June or July at the latest.
- We are in the final stages of having a refrigerator and food pantry located on the outside of the SE Branch to help supply healthy food for residents. We will be having a Grand Opening for this project on Monday June 5 @ 11am.

DECISION MAKING

- Decided to move forward with an upcoming project that will help to increase ESL classes offered in Reading. We will be collaborating with the Literacy Council and RSD on this in the fall.

CHALLENGES/OTHER ISSUES

- We were excused from the Lawsuit against Parking Authority, Library and City.
- There are some issues with the back yard of a property that connects with the library's Foundation building and parking lot. We have been having issues with excessive trash, dead animals, people using it as a living space/storage space/bathroom, and there has been drug activity here as well. It is making staff feel uncomfortable and unsafe as the parking connects to this yard. Have talked to the police about this, which helped a little. I recently made a complaint to the City's Irequest.

POLICE:

The Police Department has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The results of the latest Neighborhood Gun Violence Unit detail. The unit conducted enforcement operations on May 11th that resulted in the following:

Felony Arrest – 2

Warrant Service – 2

Stolen Firearm Recovered – 1

Traffic Stops – 9

PUBLIC WORKS:

The Public Works Department has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Parks swings, Slides, Nets – Completed
- Solid Waste/Recycling Division Manager completed the “Speed Spanish” Course through BTI and received a certificate, next step is to take “Speed Spanish 2” with the goal of acquiring a basic understanding and comprehension of the language over the next year.
- Solid Waste/Recycling Division Manager interviewed two (2) applicants for open part-time positions in the Solid Waste Division, one was hired and the second is under consideration, after filling these positions we will be fully staffed for the first time in a year.
- The Heritage Park outfall replacement project had a final inspection with the contractor. The new split rail fence was noted to require attention again with rail replacement. Also, the rental security fencing is having brush cleared from it prior to its removal and return.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- Baer Park and 3rd and Spruce groundbreaking was held 5/10.
- Roof construction began at 3rd & Spruce.
- Clean City Coordinator Ryan signed up 4 new participants in the “Adopt-A-Block” initiative bringing the number to 126 as of 5/10/2023 and installed 6 new signs. Ryan also organized and facilitated the annual “Great American Clean-Up” Saturday 4/22/2023 at City Park in conjunction with the Earth Day Celebration. 350 Volunteers cleaned 12 sites and their surrounding areas across the City picking up 482 bags of trash, 32 tires, 23 TVs, 33 bags of yard waste as well as cleaning 32 storm drains totaling 7.77 tons of litter and trash cleaned from our streets, sidewalks, alleys, and public spaces.
- The Clean City Team (City Staff) completed 36 clean-up and illegal dumping projects picking up 275 bags of litter and 37 bulk items. Staff picked up 30 tires and 34 TV’s. 19 dead animals were removed from the streets, 90 recycling bins were delivered and 126 storm drains checked with 65 cleaned of 10 bags of litter. Clean City Program “Gateway Tuesday” is ongoing.
- 19th Ward Pump Station and Force Main Projects - The complete force main permit modification application packet submitted to PA DEP. City staff and the CM team have contacted the property owner about easements required for the force main to continue the property acquisition.
- The City selection team interviewed the top team for the new 19th Ward pump station design and Purchasing provided the recommendation to Council for the bid award.
- Climate Action Plan (L-CAP) workshops meetings scheduled for June 5th 5pm, June 10th 11 am (SE branch RPL), June 7th 5pm, June 17th (NE branch RPL) - sign up & flyers will be distributed week of 5/15- 30 people max at each session. Administration & Council invited to attend as residents (in-house sessions will be scheduled for July).
- Lucky’s Lane (339 S. 7th Street) garden install scheduled for May (regarding by RAWA to begin stone installation week of 5/15).

- River Road Extension – The Contractor has completed all the work except for some pavement markings and fencing. An informal punch list was generated yesterday. It appears the project will be under budget. I have instructed that our consultant generate a work order to allow the city to be reimbursed for costs already paid by the city in order to fully expend the Federal grant.
- 2023 Paving Project, Contract No. 1 – The bids were opened on 4/17/23 and Council awarded on 5/8/23 to Allen Myers low bid at \$4.9M, which is under the estimated cost of \$6.1M. The Purchasing issue was resolved, and we are awaiting Law to process the contract.
- 18W Liggett Ave/Hancock Blvd. Intersection – SSM and city are scheduling a meeting with the 18W committee to do a final review of the final plan, hopefully for next week. SSM to then finish the final drawings and specs for bidding this summer. This will be bid on with 2 contracts: one for storm sewer and one for paving. Anticipated total cost is \$3M. The cost for this project, the current 2022 Paving Project, will probably exceed the available 2023 LFT budget so we will split the Intersection project and push the remaining work into 2024.
- 18W Bike Safety Trail Project – Layer 1 of this project is to install the curbed boulevard islands and is completed except for the Liggett Ave. Intersection section. This section will be complete with the Intersection project (noted above). Layer 2 is the bike trail. MTA has provided their cost estimate to provide the Bike Trail engineering and appears acceptable and will probably be executed soon.
- Knock-Down Traffic Signals – All 5 signals have been replaced but MetEd has not yet connected the power to the signals at 4th and Court St and 3rd and Buttonwood. Telco and PW are working with MetEd to get this done. The city needs to pay MetEd for the service connection but has not yet sent their invoice.
- N Front Street Traffic Signals Upgrade – SSM to resubmit revised drawing to PennDOT soon and submit final design invoices next week to meet the reimbursement deadline. The Green-Light-GO grant for engineering expires on June 30 this year. The ARLE grant for the construction expires on June 30 of 2024. This project needs to be advertised by July of this year to ensure it is completed by that deadline.
- Buttonwood Gateway Phase 1 – PW received quotes from 2 contractors to complete the sewer main and lateral rehabilitation work for much less than the prior public bid. The low quote is from a Costars contractor which the City will probably utilize.
- Buttonwood Gateway Phase 2 – This is the streetscaping phase which is now in the final design. Tim met with Jamal (Zoom) to confirm his role in this project. RRA owns all the properties that Delval has developed and is the main proponent for this urban renewal program. Jamal agreed to take an active role.
- Castlewood Street Dedication – Cedarville conducted the assessment of the stormwater management system. The report is being revised this week to include an assessment of the capacity of the system. Tim reviewed his expectations of the report with Cedarville this week.
- 13th and Pike Intersection Safety – A draft ordinance is being prepared for Council to approve the extended no parking zones along N. 13th St. per MTA's design. If approved can be incorporated into the 2023 Paving Project.

CHALLENGES/OTHER ISSUES

- 8th and Court boiler system- Under construction- Blanski Energy Services- possible conflict with Structural damages identified. HVAC contractor on board to delay if necessary.

- Egelman's Dam- ECS drill completed- BOG TURTLE hazard identified- Change order executed- SPHO cultural importance identified- researching documents.
- WWTP staff began the trial for an alternative chemical for use in the solid's operation on 03/28. This is to maintain indoor air quality and air permit compliance since we still are unable to obtain a chemical due to a January 11th fire at the manufacturing and warehouse facilities.
- The power transfer issue at 6th & Canal Pump Station is being monitored closely following another attempt to resolve with the electrical contractor and their instrumentation subcontractor. Additional control system issues were experienced that need to be addressed.
- The WWTP was in compliance for April with lower permit limits beginning May 1st.
- A surfactant slug load began impacting operations on 04/21 with increases in effluent solids and ammonia being experienced. WWTP staff is closely monitoring and communicating to stay in compliance and reduce impacts. Additional process sampling and analysis was completed to monitor the effectiveness of process control adjustments. Further process control adjustments made as part of the corrective action plan seem to have been effective in ensuring the plant is compliant with the lower summer limits that are effective May 1st.
- Lateral damage on a state route directly under a recent RAWA repair site was excavated for the Sewers team to make the repair at this commercial property.
- Issues with prompt payment of utility bills- not being distributed in a timely manner, nor being received within 30 days is continuing to result in substantial late fees (which can & should be avoided). Electronic (EFT or ACH) payment to utilities (Met-Ed, UGI, Comcast, & Direct Energy) is requested.
- Request from a resident about beekeeping- we do not have any ordinances specific to beekeeping- asking resident to connect with local beekeeper group & to register hive with PA Dept. of Ag. Model ordinance under consideration with EAC- on May's agenda.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

L-CAP Workshops: SE RPL: June 5 & June 10, NE RPL: June 7 & June 17

Juneteenth w/ NAACP, Elks Lodge: June 17th

Good Medicine Indigenous Wellness Celebration: June 3rd, Riverfront Park (10am)

EAC WWTP Tour, June 27, noon (staff/administration/ council welcome)

EJ Dives Picnic in the Park, July 8th (w/ 18th Wonder)

Riverzilla: August 12, Riverfront Park