



# Administrative Report

## Mayor Eddie Moran

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** William M. Heim, Managing Director  
**PREPARED BY:** Kenya S. Edmonds, Special Assistant  
**MEETING DATE:** June 26, 2023  
**AGENDA MEMO DATE:** June 21, 2023

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### ➤ **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**

The Community Development Department has the following updates for the period starting May 15<sup>th</sup> through May 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Community Development participated in the Mayor's ribbon cutting ceremony at City Park on June 7<sup>th</sup>. New equipment installed in the park and funded by the CDBG allocated community grant. Estimated cost is \$1.0 million.
- Berks Opportunity Housing, a subsidiary of Berks Redevelopment Authority is requesting to become a certified Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) for the City of Reading. The City receives annual CHDO funds in the amount of \$150,000 in addition to \$30,000 administration fees, totaling \$180,000. Since 2021, assigned funds have not been allocated to any City based CHDO organization.
- Continued communication with different developers regarding Affordable Housing initiatives within the City. HDC Mid-Atlantic and Landis Community Development are interested in revitalizing blighted commercial properties such as 201 S 6<sup>th</sup> St and 500 N 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Community Development indicated Low-income Housing Tax Credit application and approval will be necessary to ensure financial gaps are addressed. Any of these projects estimated rehab cost exceeds \$30.0million.
- HOME ARP will continue delivering applications to interested agencies to partake the leading effort for addressing emergency shelters, establishing single room occupancy (SRO), and shelters managed affordable housings.
- Monitoring funds for CDBG-CV, allocated funds to assist in homelessness and rapid rehousing by paying delinquent rent and back utility invoice. Program funds were reduced to \$500,000 due to the noticeable drop in the number of applications. The remaining CDBG-CV funds will be allocated to other City projects such as upgrading HVAC systems in fire stations.
- Zoning Hearing Board approved an application granting the change of use at 601 Penn Street (former Santander Bank) to build high density residential apartments. The Building will host 207 market rate apartments, restaurants, and other commercial facilities.

- Building and Trade received thirty (30) permit applications, eight (8) sets of full plans (architectural, MEP), completed five (5) plan reviews, approved two (2) plans, issued forty-four (44) building permits for various construction tasks and approved four (4) cases of emergency utility restorations. B&T inspected one hundred two (102) construction sites, a total of eighty-four (84) passed inspection and the remaining eighteen (18) are scheduled for reinspection.
- Property Maintenance hired four (4) new employees who started June 16<sup>th</sup> or earlier, two (2) new candidates will start July 1<sup>st</sup>. HR is assisting to find four (4) more qualified individuals to fill the open positions of Property Maintenance Inspectors.
- Property Maintenance division, completed one hundred ninety-three (193) quality of life inspections/citation, scheduled one hundred thirty-four (134) health, fire, and safety inspections, four hundred twenty-one (421) residential inspection for 2-year or property transfers, one (1) court appearance and issued three (3) notices of violations. The drop in the number of inspections attributed to Energov training.
- Historic Preservation Specialist, received eight (8) applications for completion of appropriateness (COA), approved three (3) applications, issued two (2) building permits, and supported forty-two (42) City residents with their application and request to make modifications to the exterior of residential or commercial façade. Additional details are available in the HARB agenda.
- HUD LHHP Division Director visited the office of the lead abatement unit to monitor the performance of the existing \$3.4 million lead abatement program and was disappointed in the lack of progress made towards family outreach and residential cleanup efforts, staff expressed that the City procurement policy could be hindering at times. A more proactive schedule will be discussed in the next monthly follow up visit.

➤ **FINANCE:**

The Finance Department has the following updates:

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

• **IT Update**

- Point to Point network and internet connections between the Public Works facility and City Hall have been successfully established.
- IT Staff is addressing an issue causing the replication of storage data between the Public Works and City Hall networks which negatively affects potential disaster recovery functions.
- Staff is preparing the City Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> floor wiring closet ahead of the installation of a new two-post network rack.
- IT personnel are preparing the telephone service for the new 9<sup>th</sup> & Marion Fire Station. Pending receipt of necessary hardware, the network creation and cellular to analog phone adapter will be completed.

- **CSC Update**

**Police/Pride Parade Issue**

- CSC staff has received numerous phone calls, emails, and service requests regarding the police arrest issue. Most communications received have been neither respectful nor courteous. Staff has done an excellent job in remaining neutral and polite when responding.

**Contract Expirations on Residential Trash Service:**

- The majority of residents who currently utilize private trash collection services have contracts with haulers that will expire in the next month. Staff anticipates mailing over eight hundred letters to these property owners in the near future.

- **Accounting Update**

- A copy of the completed Maximus 2021 Cost Allocation Plan study has been received. Information requests will be forwarded to appropriate City departments to begin the 2022 cost study once the final external audit report has been received.
- A response was issued to a request by the Department of Justice Grants Financial Management Division to complete a Supplement to the Internal Controls Questionnaire submitted regarding DOJ Award Number 2020-DJ-BX-0233.
- The Accounting Manager performed an internal audit of EHD (Engle-Hambright & Davies, Inc) invoicing as requested by the Health and Safety Coordinator to check for internal errors during the month of January 2023. It was determined that all invoices with the exception of two were paid.
- The Accounting Manager completed an internal audit of Direct Energy (utility supply vendor) invoicing as requested by the Sustainability Manager to check for internal errors between November 2022 and June 5, 2023. It was determined that all invoices with the exception of two were paid.
- The Accounting Manager is working with IT personnel regarding the need for a custom Munis system report, Vouchers Payable General Ledger Trial Balance, to be generated internally in order to eliminate the need for custom reporting service charges from the vendor.

- **Purchasing Update**

**Current Projects**

- **PY2024 to PY2028 CDBG ESG and HOME Environmental Review Record Consultant Services** – The City is soliciting proposals from consulting firms for the preparation of the regulatory required Environmental Review Records for the 2024 to 2028 Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the Emergency Solutions Grant, and the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Programs. Proposals are due on June 29, 2023.

- **Demolition of 1330 Greenwich Street, Reading, PA** - After all debris has been removed, the demolition area shall be inspected by the Engineer and given approval. The fill shall then be installed in 12" compacted layers to the finish grade. Bids are due on July 6, 2023.
- **Commodities on behalf of the Wastewater Treatment Plant**
  - **Sulfur Dioxide Cylinders** – per calendar year approximately 75,000 pounds, more or less, to be supplied in one (1) ton containers. Bids are due on June 20, 2023.
  - **Sodium Hydroxide** - for calendar years 2024 and 2025 and will amount to approximately: 20,000 gallons of 25% NaOH shipped in bulk with deliveries being no less than 4,000 gallons OR 20,000 gallons of 25% NaOH shipped in 275-gallon totes if our bulk delivery system were to fail. Bids are due on June 8, 2023.
  - **Gaseous Chlorine Cylinders** - per calendar year and will amount to approximately 200,000 pounds, more or less, which will be supplied in one (1) ton containers. Bids are due on July 11, 2023.
  - **Sodium Hypochlorite** – for calendar years 2024 and 2025. 150,000 gallons of 12.5% sodium hypochlorite shipped in bulk with deliveries being no less than 4,000 gallons OR 150,000 gallons of 12.5% sodium hypochlorite shipped in 275-gallon totes, if the bulk delivery system were to fail. Bids are due on June 12, 2023.
- **Project Manager (ERP System) / EnerGov Implementation**
  - The Go-live date moved to 8/1 with 9/5 reserved as a potential back up due to recently discovered configuration needs as well as availability of the conversion engineer.
  - A third pass of the conversion data completed, and a fourth pass will be necessary due to the number of items requiring attention.
  - A quotation has been requested for the following additional dates with the implementation consultant which are not included in the existing contract: 7/11 through 7/13, 8/1 through 8/3, and 9/5 through 9/7.
  - The need for refinement of existing forms is anticipated. Due to the time-consuming nature of the task, this is targeted for the summer or fall months.
  - The tentative date for announcing the implementation of the EnerGov system to the public is 9/1. Individuals have been identified to provide demonstrations of the various modules.
- **Advancing Health Literacy (AHL) Grant**
  - Team members attended in-person and virtually, the Office of Minority Health Conference in Atlanta, GA held on 6/4 to 6/6.
  - A No Cost Extension has been preliminarily approved and receipt of a Notice of Award is pending.
  - One hundred printed and bound copies of the organizational toolkit were received from Penn State College of Medicine.
  - Health Materials focus groups were completed on 6/03 at Temple of Prayer church and on 6/07 at the YMCA.
  - A Misinformation Toolkit has been translated and is ready for print.
  - The next steps for organizational partners have been finalized and communicated to the partners.

- Team members staffed a table at the City's First Friday Event on 6/3 hosted at the GoggleWorks.

### **Upcoming Events**

- June 21- Focus Group Patient Experience Session- BCC 10am-12pm (Spanish)
- June 22- TENTATIVE- Focus Group Patient Experience Session- 10am-12pm
- June 23- TENTATIVE- Focus Group Patient Experience Session- 10am-12pm
- June 30- Powerful Women Event at The Salvation Army

- **Capital Projects**

#### **Projects Status Updates**

- 8<sup>th</sup> & Court Fire Station Boiler System – Under construction by Blanski Energy Services. A potential conflict with structural damages has been identified for which engineering reports estimate a \$48,000 construction cost. Funds may need to be re-worked from the station improvements budget.
- Egelman's Dam – ESC drill was completed. Bog turtle hazards have been identified.
- 800rd block Courtyard – Remobilization expected to occur the week of 6/12. Thirty days have been added to the schedule as well as a change order in the amount of \$81,000.00.
- Mineral Springs Hotel – Demolition expected to begin the week of 6/5. The contractor has been unresponsive during the past week.
- Property Sales – Two additional proposals are pending; however, involved firms have been unresponsive.
- Reading Public Library HVAC – A potential cost splitting opportunity with a Shuman property is developing. Lead issues are back in the picture and a change order is pending.

### **ONGOING PROJECTS**

- Purchasing Office will begin transitioning away from a reliance on PennBid as we pivot to building our own database of contractors and vendors through a new OpenGov Procurement Portal. Anticipated to go live in the beginning of July 2023.

### **➤ FIRE:**

The Fire Department has the following updates:

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Spoke with the two female students being assigned to the department as part of the Mayors Summer Youth Program. Both ladies seem highly interested.
- The first round of the department providing training to an outside agency took place on Wednesday June 14. CPR/AED training provided to all employees of the Santander Performing arts center as well as the arena.

- Picked up two new Engines on June 16,2023. After training and equipment mounting, they should be in service by mid to late July.
- The second new Medic unit was delivered and will be in service next week.
- Took delivery of a new F150 assigned to our training Lt, it was ordered April 2022.

## **ONGOING PROJECTS**

- 9<sup>th</sup> and Marion Station – Slow progress. Unknown timeline. Legal is managing the issue.
- HR, DC Glore, and I have all interviewed the candidate for the EVT mechanic position, we found him to be a fit for the position. He is working on one final certification. Once he has that which will be shortly, we will look to offer him the position.

## **DECISION MAKING**

- No discipline or grievances.
- Reached an agreement with the union as far as our recall procedures to help minimize the times that individuals, primarily paramedics are being ordered back in to work. So far it has helped out a bit.

## **INCIDENTS / CHALLENGES**

- Had an additional FF/EMT retire earlier than expected.
- Looking at ideas to potentially hire additional Paramedics only to help fill gaps we currently have. Which stands at 11 on the EMS side.

## **➤ LIBRARY:**

The Library has the following updates:

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Open House held for our Community Refrigerator located at the Southeast Branch. This is the first Community Refrigerator in Berks County. This will provide residents in need another access point for healthy and free food choices.
- Wi-Fi Hotspots are now available to patrons to check out with a valid library card.
- The Digital Literacy Instructor has iPads and Wi-Fi Hotspots available and is actively working with around twenty-one individuals interested in digital training and the equipment.

## **ONGOING PROJECTS**

- RFP for evaluating our bank were due by Thursday June 14. We will now start the review process.

## **DECISION MAKING**

- The RPL app broke down about a week ago, and we discovered there is no available fix. We decided to move forward without an app.
- We are exploring the possibilities of keeping the branches open during lunch.

## **CHALLENGES/OTHER ISSUES**

- Being busy while there are vacancies.

## **➤ POLICE:**

The Police Department has the following update:

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- The Reading Police Department have made arrests in recent shooting, shots fired and robbery incidents.

## **ONGOING PROJECTS**

- MDT Replacement and CI Tablets: Patrol supervisors and specialty unit personnel (MOC, SRO, Penn Street Detail, TLEU) have been issued tablets and their vehicles converted for use. Patrol officers assigned to platoons will start being issued tablets the week of June 19<sup>th</sup>. Once all of the tablets are issued all patrol vehicles will be converted for use.
- Investigations Office Renovations: New flooring and counters have been installed, and painting was completed in the main investigation office. Officer furniture installation is scheduled for the week of June 19<sup>th</sup>. Phase 2 of the project (Vice offices) is scheduled to begin July 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Patrol Vehicle Replacement (CIP Funds): Vehicles are being delivered to the dealer. Vehicles are scheduled to be deployed in September after up-fitting is completed. Deployment is slightly delayed due to radio equipment ordered in January being on backorder.
- Bomb Squad Response Vehicle Replacement: Agenda memo and resolution paperwork are being sent to the City Clerk for approval at the June 26<sup>th</sup> regular meeting.

## **DECISION MAKING**

- Chief Torielli reviewed the current private duty hourly fee, consulting with the Managing Director and Finance Director to raise the rate to be in line with current expenses.
- Conditional offers extended to five applicants to start the police academy in July. Agenda memo will be provided to the City Clerk for approval at the June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **CHALLENGES/OTHER ISSUES**

- Nothing significant at this time.

## ➤ PUBLIC WORKS:

The Public Works Department has the following updates:

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Solid Waste/ Recycling Division Manager completed and submitted Reading School District (RSD) Recycling Agreement for 2023-2024 to City Council and RSD School Board for approval on 6/5/2023. City Council approved on 6/12/2023.
- Sustainability Manager meetings & events attended: Legacy City calls, Keep Reading Beautiful steering committee, PW Safety training, Urban Ag workgroup, multiple meetings between the Corps Network & others concerning the status of the RCC.

### ONGOING PROJECTS

- Solid Waste/ Recycling Division Manager facilitated Republic Services Quarterly Meeting 6/6/2023 at PW Facility to discuss issues and concerns with Republic Management staff.
- Clean City Coordinator Ryan Bradley signed up three (3) new participants in the “Adopt-A-Block” initiative bringing the number to one hundred and thirty-six (136) as of 6/13/2023 Existing “Adopt A Block” groups cleaned up eighteen (18) bags of litter, four (4) bags of yard waste and one (1) bulk item. Ryan also organized and facilitated volunteer Clean-Ups at 5th and Buttonwood, 5th and Washington, Orange, and Cherry St. and Perkiomen Ave. Fifty (50) volunteers cleaned up seventeen (17) bags of litter and sixty-four (64) yard waste bags. Ryan also attended and helped staff “First Friday” on 6/2/2023.
- Clean City Team (City Staff) completed thirty-six (36) clean-up and illegal dumping projects picking up three hundred and nine (309) bags of litter and twenty-three (23) bulk items. Staff picked up fifteen (15) tires and twenty (20) TV’s. Thirteen (13) dead animals removed from the streets, and twenty (20) graffiti abatement projects were completed, and twenty-five (25) illegal signs removed from poles. “Gateway Tuesday” is ongoing as well as extra cleanings at the Pagoda, the overlooks, and City Parks with the summer season ramping up.
- Solid Waste/ Recycling Division Manager met with Matt Cogle of Cogle’s Recycling to discuss “Nespresso” pods recycling program partnership.
- 8th and Court boiler system- under construction- Blanski Energy Services- possible conflict with structural damages identified.
- Egelman’s Dam- ECS drill completed- BOG TURTLE hazard identified- Change order executed.
- 800rd block Courtyard- under construction- 30 days added to schedule and \$81,000 by change order.
- Mineral Springs Hotel- Demo expected to begin week of 6/5- Vendor non-responsive 1 week.
- Property sales-2 additional proposals pending non-responsive firms.
- Reading Public Library HVAC- LEAD is back on the radar- Change order pending.
- WWTP SCADA security testing is occurring at individual terminal locations.
- The pump seals at Schlegel Pool were replaced by the WWTP maintenance team upon the report of leakage. The rebuilt pump had the same issue. Further investigation showed an issue with the shaft which will be addressed first to ensure it resolves the leakage problem.
- Reading Climate Corps: Steering committee met on 6/14 to discuss next steps: updating MOU/Service Agreement w/ PowerCorpsPHL for 2023 cohort, updating budget & program



schedule, continuing discussions with Berks Connections for managing 2024 program.

Requesting agenda inclusion for July 3rd Council strategic planning session.

- Keep Reading Beautiful is progressing through the onboarding process with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.
- River Road Extension – The Construction work is complete except for the fencing and possibly repaving of W. Windsor St. We are waiting to see if PennDOT is going to make the contractor do the repaving (due to asphalt testing failure). The ribbon cutting date will be pushed back to sometime in July after Council votes on the Lincoln St. ordinance. The added reimbursement to City at the end of the project estimated to be at least \$500,000.
- 2022 Paving Project – Curb ramp construction is progressing on schedule. Expected completion is August 31, 2023.
- 2023 Paving Project, Contract No. 1 – The Pre-Construction meeting was held on 6/13/23. Ramp design work has already started. Completion date for paving is October 31, 2023. The contractor (Allan Myers) stated this should occur earlier, by end of September.
- 2023 Paving Project, Contract No. 2 - 18W Hancock/E. Wyo Boulevards Paving - Final design is in progress, MTA said it should be ready for bidding in June or early July. This project estimates at \$3.5M. We just added the repair of the failing inlets on Hancock Blvd.
- 18W Liggett Ave/Hancock Blvd. Intersection – Final bid specs and drawings for the Stormwater Improvements phase of this project were submitted to the city today. We will issue the Purchasing Authorization form and schedule the bid. Anticipated start date is August 15, 2023, and completion early this winter.
- 18W Bike Safety Trail Project – The contractor installed the final island for Layer 1 phase. The remaining islands will be constructed under the Liggett Ave. Intersection Project, coming this summer. For Layer 2 (the bike trail), McCormick Taylor has stated the engineering design.
- N Front Street Traffic Signals Upgrade – SSM is coordinating the final details with PennDOT to complete the Final Engineering phase approval. The project is anticipated to bid this summer. PW submitted all the engineering invoices to PennDOT for the Green Light GO reimbursement.
- Buttonwood Gateway Phase 2 – This is the streetscaping phase, which is now in the final design, the consultant (CDR) requires an additional sidewalk survey to add needed detail for the restoration plan. This is an exceedingly difficult part of the project.
- ARLE Downtown Traffic Signal Retiming – The Pre-Construction Meeting was held on 6/14/23. The work has started, and PW is coordinating with IT to determine how the new computers will access the internet. IT strongly advised to not connect to the city network for that.
- Castlewood Street Dedication – PW reviewed the stormwater system report and determined that the system can be accepted by the city if the HOA provides the recommended repairs. Next step is for PW to issue a letter of recommendation and then the PC must approve a Revision to Plan of Record.

## **CHALLENGES/OTHER ISSUES**

- WWTP maintenance continues to have major repair projects deferred until parts can be received. The gravity belt thickener substructure originally scheduled for delivery in March has been delivered in June only to have some pieces fabricated incorrectly. This has only one unit available for service which will need the same rehabilitation completed once it can be removed from service.

- 19<sup>th</sup> Ward Pump Station - City staff and the CM team have contacted the property owner about easements required for the force main to continue the property acquisition. The Solicitor is being kept informed as communication has stalled temporarily, and other methods may be required. The kickoff is scheduled for 06/20 and a field meeting occurred with Berks County Parks to introduce the new design team.
- A suspected slug load with polymer was discovered from the 6th and Canal pump station on 06/03. With the anoxic selector zone initiated on 06/01, WWTP staff has been closely monitoring and communicating to stay in compliance.
- The annual whole effluent toxicity testing (WETT) has been scheduled for August. This test uses plant effluent to determine the toxicity to varied species of fish over a given time period.
- Parts finally received for the gravity belt thickener substructure rehabilitation. However, not all the parts were correctly fabricated. The vendor has been contacted to expedite producing the correct parts for the rehabilitation so the other brevity belt thickener can then have the same rehabilitation. In the interim, a detailed operational backup plan is being developed in the event the currently operational unit should fail.
- A meeting occurred with the industry that created compliance issues at the WWTP over the winter holidays. They contacted the City to discuss a planned slug discharge in preparation for maintenance of the facility during a shutdown in early July. After explaining in the new treatment process in detail, they were very understanding and willing to work with the City to avoid being the cause of future upsets.
- A reported sinkhole in the 2100 block of North Front Street investigated, and a sanitary sewer main break repaired as a result.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- L-CAP Workshops: SE RPL: June 5 & June 10, NE RPL: June 7 & June 17
- Juneteenth w/ NAACP, Elks Lodge: June 17th
- 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