



Administrative Report

Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: William M. Heim, Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Kenya S. Edmonds, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: July 10, 2023
AGENDA MEMO DATE: July 05, 2023

➤ **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**

Community Development has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The CD is asking for a modification to the CDBG-CV in order to reallocate \$500,000 to the HVAC project at the Liberty Fire Station Museum. The transfer of funds is necessary to meet the HUD Federal deadline of July 2026. For helping families, HRC received \$1,412,307 from CDBG-CV. HRC has spent \$284,750.26, or 20%, of its \$1,127,556.74 balance. The aforementioned change was submitted to City Council with the expectation that it would be approved by July 24 in order to hasten the distribution of monies benefiting COVID vulnerable institutions. The remaining \$627,556.74 from CDBF-CV will be used by HRC.
- The Emergency Solution Grant Program, ESG-CV received \$2,200,060 which was used to help families stay in their homes. With administrative costs allotted at \$50,702.53, the total amount drawn down to date is \$1,977,349.57. The Berks Coalition for Ending Homelessness' (BCEH) will manage the remaining \$172,007.80 to fund the hotel voucher program. The ESG-CV program ends September 2023.
- CD took part in a Town Hall discussion about small company finance and securing city approval from zoning, planning, building, and trade with Representative Manuel Guzman and the director of DCED.
- At the Jamestown residential complex, located at 300 Lackawanna St., PMI condemned three apartment buildings. Due to a damaged sanitary sewage line, Property Management was unable to maintain a clean and healthy environment throughout Building 13. The three residential units received a PMI notice asking the residents to vacate the area while repairs are made.
- 39 new applications received, and 72 updated applications were reviewed by zoning. Staff is presently evaluating 25 permits, issued 9 zoning permits. Only one case will present a dimensional variance for a daycare at the zoning hearing on July 12.

- 54 permit applications received, 6 sets of complete plans (architectural, MEP), 5 plan reviews completed, 7 plans approved, 40 building permits issued for various construction jobs, and approved 4 cases of emergency utility restorations by Building and Trade. B&T inspected 92 construction sites a total of 70 passed inspection, and the remaining 22 scheduled for reinspection.
- Lead Paint Hazard Division continues their outreach program. Clean up effort for lead abatement stalled until temporary accommodation is resolved.

➤ **FINANCE:**

Finance has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

• **Accounting Update**

▪ **Accounting Manager:**

- In preparation for the 2024 budget process, the accounting manager is training the accountant intern how to create the 2024 budget spreadsheet and the position listing spreadsheet file.
- Has been exploring the possible custom reporting options using the CUBE database.
- Has been discussing the accounts for 2023 Capital Budget and reviewing bank account reconciliations in meetings with the revenue accountant.
- Is collaborating with the Risk and Safety Coordinator on the Self Insurance Fund, processing registered bills for deposit, and estimating the required funding for the remainder of the year.

• **Purchasing Update**

▪ **Current Projects**

○ **Centre Park Revitalization Project:**

- Barry Isett, a landscape architecture firm, was given this project to carry out the design engineering for the renovation of Centre Park. The final plan is for replacing the existing fountain with a period-appropriate Victorian-style fountain, renovating the walkways and garden elements, adding more water supply points, replacing the benches, and updating the lighting fixtures. On April 18, 2023, bids for this project were due. For this project, we only received one offer, which came in over budget. On June 29, 2023, responses to a rebid were due.

○ **Laboratory Services for the WWTP**

- For this project, a vendor will be hired to perform laboratory analysis for the parameters needed by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit in addition to the wet chemistry that is typically done in-house to maintain plant compliance. Pesticides, semi-volatiles, volatiles, organics, entire effluent toxicity, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and metals are all included in this analysis, although they are not the only ones. April 5, 2023, was the deadline for proposals, two were received. The new vendor was picked by a

four-person review panel. This will come before City Council during its meeting on July 10, 2023.

- **Camp Lily**
 - Included is 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 were received on June 16, 2023. Staff is awaiting receipt of documents missing from the bid bond from the low bidder, Dolan Construction. A recommendation memo and schedule were issued to the project manager for signature.
- **Upcoming Projects**
 - Roofing Replacement for the Reading Public Library - Northwest Branch
 - Multiyear Financial Plan & Recommendations
- **Project Manager (ERP System)**
 - **EnerGov Implementation**
 - The go-live date, which is now 8/1, needs to be changed. Prior to June 30, a timing choice must be made. Prior to becoming live, the following five crucial steps must be completed:
 - Conversion is finished.
 - Licensing issues resolved to allow for training completion.
 - Tyler Payments need to be established.
 - General billing training is required to be finished.
 - Timelines that are feasible must be added to the go-live checklist.
 - Tyler is finishing up the fourth pass of conversion data before it is reviewed by subject matter experts (SMEs), and it is possible that a fifth pass will be necessary.
 - To discuss current problems and engage in problem-solving, a standing meeting of staff members from Community Development has been organized.
 - Interrupting application acceptance in the days leading up to go-live will need to be taken into consideration. This may be required throughout the conversion phase in order to give the SMEs enough time to confirm the data and ensure that the conversion engineer is available in case there are any last-minute modifications.
 - **My Civic 311/Tyler 311 Implementation**
 - The implementation process is anticipated to start in the middle of August and last for three to five months.
- **Advancing Health Literacy (AHL) Grant**
 - With Tower Health as an organizational partner, an MOU II was inked.
 - The following Health Materials Focus Group meetings have been completed:

- Spanish sessions held at BCC, and at COR on June 21, and an English session held at AARP on June 22.
 - A one-page organizational evaluation summary form designed by Penn State College of Medicine is ready for print.
 - Received the organizational assessment reports in bound form from RACC.
 - Kevin Murphy, executive director of the Berks County Community Foundation, consented to write a letter of support for the City of Reading and the health literacy initiatives.
 - The Tower Health, Health Equity Coalition Committee heard from the Director of Health Equity who promoted the Health Equity Taskforce.
- **Upcoming Events**
 - June 30 - Powerful Women Event- at the Salvation Army
 - July 19 - Noon - TENTATIVE- Organizational Assessment Meeting with Berks Community Health Center

➤ **FIRE:**

Fire Department has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Summer Youth Program participant La'Raela McQuay is assigned to the Fire Department. She is a 15-year-old who is enthusiastic about the Fire and EMS service. She is being shown all parts of the department and is a very respectful individual. Her ambition is to enroll in an EMT class in December, after she is 16 years old. We could look into the cost of this and even sponsor her. It is something that can be considered later in the year.
- On Thursday, June 22, 2023, the RFD hosted an introduction, and demonstration session for all of the students in the Summer Youth Program at the Fire Training Site. Most were very attentive. RFD would like to thank Lieutenant Jason Batz and the members of the RFD Class of 2023 for their assistance.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- 9th and Marion Station
- The EVT candidate got in touch and said he'll be earning his inspector's license in early August. We will proceed after he gives us a copy in the hopes that he will begin around the middle of August or at the beginning of September.

DECISION MAKING

- No discipline or grievances.
- Meeting scheduled July 11, regarding the future of 8th & Court. During this meeting would like to also address the plans for the use and space of Morgantown Road.

INCIDENTS / CHALLENGES

- Thinking of ways to possibly hire more paramedics just to help us fill any gaps that may exist. Which stands at 11 on the EMS side.

➤ Human Resource:

HR has the following updates:

- New Hires: 2 interns, 5 part-timers, and 37 full-timers. 44 new hires in all YTD.
- Career/Promotional Advancement: 5 City of Reading employees were promoted, and 4 part-time employees were elevated to full-time roles.
- A total of 9 City of Reading employees have advanced professionally.
- Employee Turnover: 14 retirements, 24 resignations, and 2 involuntarily terminated positions.
- City of Reading YTD total staff turnover is 40, YTD total actual staff 574, making the YTD turnover rate $(40 / 574) = 7\%$
- Job Vacancy: 22 full-time and 2 part-time positions are currently open.

➤ LIBRARY:

The Library has the following updates:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- On June 24th, RPL held a successful fundraiser with Parrot Head Club's Summer Daze. The final financial total is still being completed, but the event drew a large crowd. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to the library's success.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- RPL is searching for candidates to cover the following positions:
 - There are two (2) city positions available: Librarian II and Assistant Director.

- There are three (3) Library positions available: SE Youth Services, part-time Summer Library Clerk, and part-time Early Literacy Specialist.
- Thursday, June 14, 2023 proposal request were due for evaluating the bank. They are actively being review.
- Started the annual policy review project.
- Working on the Storywalk project at City Park with the hope of getting it kicked off in the fall.

DECISION MAKING

- RPL is:
 - Still exploring the possibilities of keeping the branches open during lunch.
 - Staff is actively pursuing training for additional ESL classes.
 - Working to coordinate SSL classes for staff and public.

CHALLENGES/OTHER ISSUES

- There are now problems with the HVAC system project, which is not finished.
- There is a bed bug issue at the RPL Southeast Branch.

➤ POLICE:

The Police Department has the following update:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- As of 30 June 2023, the RPD Neighborhood Gun Violence Unit has made 52 arrests and recovered 14 illegal firearms.
- The US Marshals Task Force has made 44 arrests year to date. The task force has prioritized locating and apprehending violent offenders in the City of Reading, and individuals who have fled the city but are still wanted for crimes of violence.
- During the past two weeks the RPD collaborated with the PA State Police, DEA, ATF, and other law enforcement agencies in conducting enforcement operations.
- LT Lillis continues to have a full schedule meeting with community groups, conducting presentations to youth groups and attending recruiting events.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- MDT Replacement and CI Tablets: IT continues to issue tablets to patrol personnel. SGT Lonsinger (Project Manager) is coordinating conversion of patrol vehicles for tablet use with the up fitter.

- Investigations Office Renovations: Work in the main Investigations Office has been completed. Personnel have moved back into their new office spaces. Phase 2 of the project (Vice offices) is scheduled to begin July 17th.

DECISION MAKING

- Five candidates hired for the July 2023 police academy. With one recent resignation department staffing is currently 157 of 168.

➤ PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works has the following update:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Baer Park Basketball Court: complete, re-dedication held June 28,2023.
- Willow Creek Dam: complete, announcement pending.
- Lance Place: Final sod placed this week, complete, dedication July 7, 2023.
- Solid Waste/Recycling Division Manager:
 - June 15, 2023, attended the Mayors Summer Youth Employment Initiative (MSIP) training, welcome and introductions to youth at City Hall.
 - June 20, 2023, attended an all-day training event: PA Electric Vehicle (EV) workshop at University of Harrisburg
 - June 24, 2023, assisted with organization of “Dumpster Day” with staff and residents at multiple locations throughout the event.
- Sustainability Manager participated in Voice Up Berks field trip to Berks Nature- Stream Study (w/ students from grades 4-7).
- River Road Extension: All construction work is complete except for a small section of hand railing to be installed soon.
- W. Windsor St: The re-test of the asphalt came back successful, no problems, so no repaving is necessary. According to the Mayor the ribbon cutting date will be July 06, 2023.
- New pump station design kickoff occurred with a series of meetings:
 - The County and legal for site discussion
 - City and municipal planning representatives for flow projection discussion
 - City operational and maintenance staff to discuss experience with particular equipment, controls, and instrumentation.
- The chlorine and sulfur dioxide systems had annual preventive maintenance and safety inspections performed by the manufacturer.

- Two new mini-split HVAC units were added in the Solids Handling Building to maintain reasonable temperatures in the new motor control center and locker room areas.
- A reported sinkhole at Church and Buttonwood Streets was investigated near the 2022 major repair site. No pipe damage is suspected, safety concerns were addressed.
- The Sewers team has received calls regarding a private issue in an apartment complex in Glenside. This was referred to the appropriate City department for follow-up.

ONGOING PROJECTS

- 800 block of Courtyard: under construction- remobilization expected week of June 12th did not occur, additional 30 days added to schedule and \$81,000 by change order.
- Mineral Springs Hotel: Demo expected begin date was the week of June 5th. Update: vendor is getting the necessary releases from DEP, MetEd and RAWA.
- Solid Waste/Recycling Division Manager communicated with, resolved issues, and answered questions for residents and businesses regarding final expiration of private hauler contracts on July 01, 2023, completing the transition to City-wide trash collection initiated in 2020 by Ordinance 49-2020.
- Clean City Coordinator:
 - 2 new participants signed up in the “Adopt-A-Block” initiative bringing the number to 138 as of June 28, 2023. Existing “Adopt A Block” groups cleaned up 12 bags of litter and 2 bags of yard waste.
 - Ryan organized and facilitated “Dumpster Day” on June 24, 2023, with 7 volunteers working with City staff at 10 locations for residents to dispose of household items from their basements and garages.
 - 23 bags of liter cleaned up from various sites by the Mayors Summer Youth Employment Initiative workers.
 - The Rotary Club of Reading cleaned up 11 bags of trash, and 4 bags of yard waste at Essick Park with the help of 17 volunteers.
 - The Clean City Team (City Staff) finished 40 clean- up and unlawful dumping initiatives, collecting 27 bulk items, 310 bags of trash, and 10 bags of yard waste. Staff members collected 21 TVs and 46 tires. 11 graffiti abatement projects were finished, 11 dead animals removed from the streets, and 62 recycling delivered.
 - “Gateway Tuesday” is ongoing.
 - 154 storm drains were checked, 66 of them were cleaned, and 17 bags of trash and debris were collected. Additional cleanings were also performed at the Pagoda, the overlooks, and the City Parks.
- Sustainability Manager meetings & events:
 - Legacy City Calls & Community Conversation (June 25th)
 - PW Safety committee
 - Urban Ag workgroup
 - Multiple meetings between the Corps Network & others concerning the status of the RCC.
 - PA EV Fleet Workshop (Harrisburg)
 - Greenhouse workgroup
 - WWTP Tour w/ EAC
 - Riverzilla Planning committee.

- Angelica Creek Watershed Association

- Installation of Lucky's Lane week of July 3rd w/ MSYI students (tree planting, raised bed building & planting, gravel grid installation) w/ BCCD & SOP.
- 18W Liggett Ave/Hancock Blvd. Intersection – Final bid specs and drawings for the Stormwater Improvements phase of this project delivered to Purchasing this week to begin the Bid Phase. Anticipated award is August 28, 2023, and expected completion early this winter or next spring.
- Knock-Down Traffic Signals – All signals fixed except for the electric feed for 4th and Court St. MetEd installed the new electric cable but the wire was not long enough to connect. Telco and PW are coordinating with MetEd to get this connection completed and the signal working.
- N Front Street Traffic Signals Upgrade – SSM is coordinating the final details with PennDOT to complete the Final Engineering phase approval. The project anticipated to bid this summer. PW submitted all of the engineering invoices to PennDOT for the Green Light GO reimbursement and the request was approved.
- Buttonwood Gateway
 - Phase 1 – PW wishes to make the sewer repairs using Performance Pipe Inc. through Costars. We are determining if PA prevailing wages will apply. CDR will be amending their drawings and specs for the in-situ pipe lining repair method. The contract is expected to be awarded in July.
 - Phase 2 – PW had meetings with CDR to resolve the remaining details with this streetscape project. The design is about 80% complete. Anticipated bid award is for August-Sept.
- Summit Chase Lighting – The construction contract was awarded on April 10, 2023, to Hirneisen. Pre-Construction meeting scheduled for July 10th.
- Guiderails – This project is in design phase. This is to install needed guiderails along streets at 4 locations. The PennDOT right of way clearance is almost complete. Utility clearance requires a hazardous waste specification for Spring Valley Road (for lead). Anticipated award is this fall. The MTA grant is active through May 2025

CHALLENGES/OTHER ISSUES

- Property sales-2 additional proposals pending non-responsive firms.
- Reading Climate Corps: Updated service agreement on Council agenda for July 10th.
- 6th & Canal Pump Station
 - The electrical contractor will install a redundant level control and programming to provide a backup system to better protect the pumps proper, pump station, and the system as a whole from flooding or failures.
 - Negotiation and communication continue with the general contractor to resolve the pump vibration potential change order request. Legal has taken the lead on this with input from the technical team.

- 11th and Spring Streets: The lighting contractor discovered a broken storm lateral that appears to have been damaged by a prior contractor. While the Sewer team was expecting a quick spot repair, the top of the pipe appears to have been jack hammered for a distance and will require additional effort to be addressed.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Lucky's Lane ribbon cutting/reveal: July 8th 2pm (Included in SOP tour) 339 S. 7th Street w/ BCCD & SOP.
- EJ Dives Picnic in the Park, July 8th (w/ 18th Wonder) 4-8pm.
- Riverzilla: August 12, Riverfront Park 11-3pm (riverbank cleanup at 9am).