



Administrative Report  
Mayor Eddie Moran

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** William M. Heim, Managing Director  
**PREPARED BY:** Kenya S. Edmonds, Special Assistant  
**MEETING DATE:** July 24, 2023  
**AGENDA MEMO DATE:** July 19, 2023

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➤ **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Community Development has the following updates:

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- CD received a grant from HUD after agreeing on the proposed budget, selecting key individuals, and developing, accepting, and incorporating the final budget, work plan, and benchmarks into the HUD-1044. Healthy Homes will get a grant of \$1,296,988 commencing on August 1st, 2023, and ending in 42 months, but not later than February 1st, 2027.
- Downtown Vision Zero is a key component of the City of Reading's active transportation plan, which aims to increase traffic safety and reduce fatal accidents. The study will be presented to the Planning Commission on July 26 after being presented to locals on July 11 at the Puerto Rican Civic Society. Attending residents were less interested in bike lanes than they were in finding a solution to the parking problem and the deteriorating sidewalk.
- The Jamestown residential complex, located at 300 Lackawanna St., PMI condemned sixteen (16) apartment buildings. The Fire Marshal and PMI had to evacuate the inhabitants since the first-floor flats had flooded. The rainstorm that hit the area on July 9, 2023 is what caused the flooding. Property Management and PMI are working together to renovate rental properties to livable standards. Families in need were transferred by Property Management to hotels in the area.
- For CDBG 2024 program, CD received 9 applications. For the HOME Investment program, 4 applications were received. June 30, 2023, was the application deadline. The focus of this year's funding efforts will primarily address needs for funding affordable housing in conjunction with alternative financing options through the Federal Home Loan Banks, Pennsylvania Housing Financing Agency, and PHFA.

- 36 applications were evaluated by zoning, 18 new applications were reviewed, and 8 zoning permits were issued. 32 more are awaiting more information for processing.
- Building and Trade received 28 applications for building permits, 6 sets of complete architectural and MEP designs, performed 5 plan reviews, authorized 9 plans, and issued 34 building permits for various construction works. No utility emergency situations required restorations. B&T inspected 65 construction sites, of which 58 passed inspection and the remaining 7 are scheduled for reinspection.
- In the property maintenance division, there were 93 quality of life inspections/citations conducted, 104 health, fire, and safety inspections scheduled, 221 residential inspections for 2-year or property transfers, 1 court appearances, and 3 notices of violations issued.
- The historic preservation specialist received 9 applications for completion of appropriateness (COA), approved 2, issued 2 building permits, and supported 32 City residents with their applications who requested modifications to the exterior of a residential or business façade.
- This month, the Lead Paint Hazard Division finished remediating two residential units. As a result of a recent resolution about temporary housing, lead abatement cleanup efforts will continue.

➤ **FINANCE**

Finance has the following updates:

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

▪ **CSC Update**

- Due to the expiration of their contracts with private haulers, 750 accounts have recently been switched to the City of Reading's trash service. In order to adjust customer billing, RAWA and the trash collection provider, Republic Services, were both notified.
- Numerous questions about the letters have been answered by CSC Staff, many of which involved the senior citizen discount option and/or requests for special accommodations. For impacted residents, these available options have made the adjustment easier.
- Employees of the Solid Waste Division have been consulting with mixed use properties and apartment buildings owners to identify which should continue to be picked up by private haulers due to pick-up logistics and the use of dumpsters. Most have been appreciative of the flexibility with their disposal needs.

- **Accounting Update**

- The Accounting Manager helped the Tyler Support Specialist in the IT Department with user rights assignments for the Munis system and helped the City Controller access system workflow assignments.
- For Funds 31 and 32, an excel spreadsheet containing the revenue and expense accounts as well as the BGA (Budgetary General Ledger Adjustment) amounts has been created. This spreadsheet aims to address any discrepancies and align the 2023 system budget in line with the one adopted by City Council.
- Final revisions are being made to the draft handbook for the Munis system and the training materials intended for new hires.

- **Grants Update**

- **DCED**

- STMP Grant Application \$65,000, (of which \$19,500 is local match) submitted on June 14, 2023
- Special ARPA funding application recommended by Representative Guzman - \$200,000 toward estimated \$400,000 Baer Park Lighting Project (baseball court) - submitted July 14, 2023.

- **Purchasing Update**

- **Current Projects**

- **PY2024 to PY2028 CDBG ESG and HOME Environmental Review Record Consultant Services**

- The City is soliciting proposals for preparing 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 were due on June 29, 2023, and five were received. The selection committee is currently being organized and will be reviewing the proposals.

- **Demolition of 1330 Greenwich Street, Reading, PA**

- Two bids were received on July 6, 2023, and forwarded to the City Building Official and CD Specialist to prepare the Recommendation Memo. An award date of August 14, 2023, by City Council is projected.

- **Roof Replacement Project for the Northwest Library**
  - This project will be funded through CDBG. Bids are due on August 1, 2023.
  
- **Pest Control Services**
  - A re-bid of the Pest Control Services has been released which includes all City owned buildings (Fire Houses, Public Works Departments, Sewers and at the WWTP). Bids for this project are due on July 18, 2023.
  
- **Upcoming Projects**
  - Multiyear Financial Plan & Recommendations
  
- **Project Manager (ERP System)**
  - **EnerGov Implementation**
    - Originally scheduled for August, go-live has been delayed. After conversion is finished, a new date will be chosen. It is likely that a fifth pass of the data will be required. Other tasks that need to be done include upgrading licensing, installing Tyler payments, providing basic billing training, and finishing the go-live checklist.
    - Building & Trades employees still need to finish a sizable amount of process testing and training. On these problems, Shannon Calluori has been working with the team.
    - The process of getting staff iPads ready for use with iG Inspect and iG Enforce functionalities is still ongoing.
    - In order to determine which reports should be developed in the EnerGov system, City IT Developer Randy Meyer has started working with team members.
    - The public education process for the City of Reading's deployment of EnerGov has been discussed by key employees. It has been suggested that using a roll out completed by the City of Gilroy serve as a model. On this subject, more study will be done, and the associated communications used will be examined.

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

- The notice of approval for the Year Three No Cost Extension was received.
- The sub-grantee and all sub-awardees received updated third year contracts.
- With St. Joseph 6th Street Clinic as an organizational partner, an MOU 2 was executed.
- In order to discuss health priorities in the City of Reading, Mayor Moran invited the Health Equity Director to a meeting with Acting Regional 3 Director of the US Department of Health and Human Services, Melissa Herd and Thomas Harris on June 28, 2023.
- The Salvation Army hosted a Powerful Woman event on June 30,2023, and it was a success.

- **Upcoming Events**

- July 10- Meeting with Helping Harvest
- July 11- Misinformation Toolkit presentation at Reading Elderly
- July 19 - Organizational Assessment with BCHC

➤ **FIRE**

The Fire department has the following updates:

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- From the Fire Marshal Office, Lieutenant Trent Zulick, and K9 Gracie assisted the Task Force with an investigation into a ship fire in the Port of Newark, New Jersey. Sadly, two Newark firefighters perished. May they both rest in peace.
- Each year, Reading Firefighters Local #1803 raises money for autism awareness by selling T-shirts. This year, a little over \$1250 was raised. With this money, the members bought new washing machines, dryers, laundry baskets, blenders, and hot plates. These things were all delivered on July 12, 2023, and donated to the Life Skills/Autism Program at Reading High School. Paramedic Lieutenant Craig Sweigart, who has an autistic son, was the driving force behind this concept. It is hoped to build on this each year with new initiatives, such as a contest to have students in the program create the t-shirt design for the following year. The members of our wonderful department are constantly working to support those in need, not just with the Autism shirts but also with other worthwhile causes like breast cancer awareness and our yearly toy drive, to name a few.

- Chief Stoudt is proud of the members and their commitment to not only their job as Firefighters and Paramedics, but to the community they serve.



### **ONGOING PROJECTS**

- 9<sup>th</sup> & Marion Station
- 8<sup>th</sup> & Court Station

### **DECISION MAKING**

- No Discipline or grievances
- Chief Stoudt had a meeting with the union and senior deputies to discuss certain operational changes.

### **INCIDENTS / CHALLENGES**

- Discussed testing for "Paramedic only" with Holly Guldin. Civil Service meeting scheduled for July 25, testing date will be determined and set at this time.
- Flooding was the only major incident that occurred on July 9; it was skillfully handled by both our department and neighboring suburban departments.

### ➤ **POLICE**

The Police department has the following updates:

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- On July 10th, the Neighborhood Gun Violence Unit conducted an operation that led to the arrest of one offender and the recovery of a firearm.
- On Wednesday, July 12th, a Ceasefire Detail involving approximately 80 law enforcement personnel was conducted by the Reading Police Department,

Berks County Detectives, Berks County Probation, Berks County Sheriff's Office, Pennsylvania State Police, and Pennsylvania State Parole. 10 arrests, 29 traffic stops, 24 citations, 4 subject stops, 28 home visits, and 2 recovered stolen vehicles were the results of the detail.

- Members of the RPD Vice Unit executed a search warrant at 50 N 4th St, Apt 6F on Thursday, July 13th, in connection with an ongoing drug investigation. Following the enforcement operation, investigators made one arrest on felony narcotics and weapons charges and seized the following items:
  - Approximately 14 grams of bulk methamphetamine and 28 grams of bulk fentanyl
  - 400 or so crushed Fentanyl pills; one Kahr 40-caliber handgun with a destroyed serial number; and various materials and tools for packing and processing drugs.

### **ONGOING PROJECTS**

- Tablets for CI and MDT Replacement are still being provided by IT to patrol officers. SGT Lonsinger (Project Manager) is coordinating the conversion of patrol vehicles for tablet use with the up fitter.
- Renovations to the Vice Investigation's office will start on July 17th with Phase 2.

### **DECISION MAKING**

- In the interim between promotional tests and the certification of the civil service list, SGT Daniel Egbert has been chosen as an acting Lieutenant in patrol.

### **➤ PUBLIC WORKS**

Public Works department has the following updates:

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- The Glenside Housing Development was included to the Street Sweeping Program. The expansion started in July and brought 22 additional blocks into our weekly sweeping schedule.
- The transition to citywide garbage service was completed on July 1, 2023, when the last of the private hauler contracts expired, adding 750 new consumers to the City trash system.
- Sustainability Manager meetings: COW (7/10), Brownfields Funding with Montrose Environmental, Active Transportation Plan, Lucky's Lane

Dedication, 18th Wonder Picnic in the Park (EJ Dives), Legacy City calls and Community Conversation, and Riverzilla Planning.

- The renovation at Lance Place was finished and dedicated.
- Resurfacing of basketball courts: 16 city basketball courts, 1 futsal court, 1 volleyball court, and 2 new pickleball courts.

## ONGOING PROJECTS

- **Reading Climate Corps:** Updated service agreement approved by Council on July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **Installation of Lucky's Lane:** week of July 3rd w/ MSYI students (tree planting, raised bed building & planting, gravel grid installation) w/ BCCD & SOP. 90% complete (planting & regrading of gravel to be completed ASAP).
- **River Road Extension:** All construction work is completed except for a small section of hand railing to be installed after fabrication in about 6 weeks. The dedication and ribbon cutting were held on July 7, 2023.
- **2022 Paving Project:** Curb ramp construction is progressing with 110 ramps completed and about 50 more to complete. Deadline is August 31. Forino completed the Buttonwood St. sidewalk design, and we should have the quote to construct this week. Expected completion is August 31, 2023.
- **18W Liggett Ave/Hancock Blvd. Intersection:** Purchasing received the signed authorization to advertise on June 27 but has not scheduled this yet. Anticipated award is August 28, 2023, and completion early this winter or next spring.
- **Knock-Down Traffic Signals:** All signals have been fixed except for the electric feed for 4th and Court St's. MetEd has been working on the electric feed for weeks. Telco will be energizing the signal either with the permanent feed or splicing a temporary feed from the old service. All the knockdowns should be working by July 11, 2023.
- **N Front Street Traffic Signals Upgrade:** PennDOT gave written approval of the signal plans this week. SSM will now be able to forward the completed drawings and specs to PW for advertising. Funding for construction will be from the city's ARLE PennDOT agreement.
- **Summit Chase Lighting:** The construction contract was awarded on April 10, 2023, to Hirneisen. Pre-Construction meeting held on July 10, 2023. The city's contractor Hirneisen will be directing MetEd to set up the new electric feed with a new meter for this circuit.



- **13th and Pike Intersection Safety:** A draft ordinance is being prepared for Council to approve the “no parking” zones along N. 13th St. per MTA’s design. If approved can be incorporated into the 2023 Paving Project. This intersection was discussed at the workshop Zoom meeting with PennDOT and council members Donna Reed and Wesley Butler. All were in favor of the added parking restrictions for this intersection and others along Hampden Boulevard to help reduce crashes.
- **Hampden Boulevard Safety Project:** As noted above, the outcome of the Hampden Boulevard meeting with PennDOT was to provide additional clear sight distances at 4 intersections on Hampden Boulevard. McCormick Taylor is preparing a proposal to produce parking restriction drawings similar to the 13th and Pike St. intersection.
- **Skate Park:** broke ground.
- **City Park Playground:** Contractor needs to complete punch list and return RAWA Water meter.
- **Clean City Coordinator’s “Adopt A Block”** Groups cleaned up 6 bags of litter. The Coordinator also organized and facilitated another clean-up at Essick Park and the surrounding area, cleaning 56 storm drains and 20 bags of litter with help from the Summer Work Students, who also assisted at “Lucky Lane” on S. 7th St. helping to install 10 tons of stone and installed 10 raised flower beds.
- **Clean City Team (City Staff):** Completed 38 clean- up and illegal dumping projects collecting 50 bulk items, 300 bags of trash, and 4 bags of yard debris. Staff members collected 19 TVs and 25 tires. 60 recycling bins were delivered, 22 graffiti abatement projects were finished, and 15 dead animals were removed from the streets. In addition to monitoring 212 storm drains and cleaning 92 of them of 20 bags of liter and debris, “Gateway Tuesday” and additional cleanings at the Pagoda, overlooks as well as the City Park are ongoing.
- **19th Ward Pump Station and Force Main Projects:** The PA DEP is providing feedback to the force main design team regarding the submission of the permit modification application packet. The City is preparing for the design team to electronically submit all other permits, including the Schuylkill River crossing to PA DEP and the railroad crossings to RailPros.

## **STORM IMPACTS**

- At the 19th Ward pump station, there were two reportable events. On Friday, 07/07, the PS temporarily overflowed into the Tulpehocken Creek. On Sunday, 07/09, it also overflowed for around five hours. Both were timely reported as needed to the proper entities.

- The 6th and Canal pump station required the second force main to be placed in service to manage the excessive flows during the 07/09 storm event. Fortunately, the event occurred during the day so the valves that require manual operation were easier to locate. Based upon this experience, improvements to be made for the personnel safety and infrastructure operation will be discussed during formal debriefing. The procedure was done 'live' with flow being maintained. The pump control scenario will also need to be reviewed and updated.
- The installation of the second force main at the wastewater treatment plant resulted in a significant surge flow at the influent junction box. This moved the sampler, tore the tubing for the 6th and Canal PS sampler, and blew the massive metal lids of the IJB into the wastewater below. A new panel has been fabricated by WWTP maintenance. As there are now several panels in the wastewater, a method to attempt retrieval will be discussed.
- The 1700 block of North 3rd Street developed a sinkhole. An exposed gas line required the replacement of about 20 feet of stormwater pipe, and the repairs were coordinated with UGI.
- The main 8-foot diameter corrugated metal pipe carrying Bernhart Creek from the Northmont inlet has lost a full 10-foot pipe portion, leaving a sizable gap in the alleyway behind the 800 block of Delta Avenue. The secondary 6-foot pipe has been inspected for a distance as well as most of the 8-foot diameter pipe as many parts of the screening of the Northmont inlet were displaced with the force of the stormwater. Fencing has been installed to secure the open site. Meetings have been held with an emergency contractor who has also been looking at how long it would be to obtain the pipe materials in the needed size. Research is being done with original design and as-built plans for the entire system from the Northmont inlet to the North Reading storm pump station. As the team is in the field getting ready to perform short-term and long-term repairs, several neighbors are actively sharing information and asking questions.
- To prevent blockages during future storm events, major open swales and key storm system locations are being inspected and debris is being cleaned.

## **CHALLENGES / OTHER ISSUES**

- Bernhart Creek and the park were impacted on July 9, 2023, by significant rains. Significant stone and sediment deposition in the park's upper section, significant erosion in the lakebed region, and significant alterations in the silting basin area, including stone wall deterioration. Confirmed with a neighbor that the lake area rose by at least 5' over baseflow.

- The manager of the Solid Waste/Recycling Division enrolled in the "Spanish 2" course at BTI on June 28 and plans to finish by August 14.
- Another significant increase in chemical prices caused by supply chain problems. For the wastewater treatment facility, chemical price increases since 2021 have varied from 30% to 370%.
- A reported sinkhole investigated in the 400 block of South 16th Street was determined to have a sanitary sewer main at issue and will be repaired as soon as storm emergencies are addressed.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **Riverzilla:** August 12, Riverfront Park 11a-3p (riverbank clean-up 9a)