

**City of Reading City Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**January 10, 2020**

Council President Waltman called the meeting to order.

MDJ Tonya Butler administered the oath of office to new District 1 Councilor Brianna Tyson.

Due to COVID-19, the City changed the meeting format to a hybrid format **with** Council attending in-person at times and others attending virtually. In addition to providing the public with the ability to observe the Council meetings virtually, via telephone and view live on the BCTV MAC Channel 99 and Facebook Live, the Committee of the Whole and Regular Meetings will be shown in the Penn Room, on the first floor of City Hall – access the Penn Room using the doors on North 8<sup>th</sup> Street only. Public comment at regular meetings can occur virtually, in writing, via telephone or in-person in the Penn Room through Zoom. The meeting agendas are posted on the City's website 3 days prior to the meeting. All agendas include the Zoom meeting information (LINK and Dial In) to easily 'click and join' the meeting. Access meeting agendas at: [https://www.readingpa.gov/council minutes agendas](https://www.readingpa.gov/council_minutes_agendas).

The invocation was given by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz.

All present pledged to the flag.

An executive session was held on personnel and litigation at the close of the Committee of the Whole meeting.

**ATTENDANCE**

Council President Waltman  
Councilor Tyson, District 1  
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2  
Councilor Ventura, District 3  
Councilor Butler, District 4  
Councilor Reed, District 5  
Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz, District 6  
Council Solicitor M. Gombar  
City Auditor M. Rodriguez  
Mayor Moran  
Managing Director Amoros  
City Clerk L. Kelleher  
City Solicitor F. Lachat

## **PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

None.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council President Waltman stated that there are no citizens registered to address Council this evening.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES**

Council President Waltman called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading and the minutes from the December 27<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Council, along with the summation of discussion from the December 27<sup>th</sup> COW.

**The agenda for this meeting, including the Consent Agenda legislation, the minutes from the December 27<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Council, the summation of discussion listed were approved by acclamation.**

### **Consent Agenda**

*The Consent Agenda is designed to provide efficient approval of non-controversial legislation that does not require discussion/debate by giving approval via acclamation when the meeting agenda is approved. The President of Council will call Council's attention to the list of Consent Agenda legislation at the meeting before action is taken, which allows Council to remove a piece of legislation for separate consideration.*

### **A. Award of Contract -**

**B. Resolution -** authorizing the City's bank accounts for 2022

**C. Resolution -** ratifying the COVID-19 Declaration of Disaster Emergency executed by the Mayor and Council President on January 4, 2022 and authorizing the continuance and renewal of the Declaration of Disaster Emergency not to exceed ninety days or the expiration of any Declaration of Disaster Emergency enacted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, whichever expires later, unless further action is taken by Council.

**D. Resolution -** authorizes the disposition of the 2015 Financial Interest Statements, Gift Reports and Campaign Finance Reports in the City Clerk's Office

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

The mayor highlighted his community activities since the December 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. The managing director suggested that everyone get vaccinated as his personal experience with COVID was like the flu on steroids. He highlighted the report attached to the agenda as follows:

**FIRE:**

- The Fire Department's 9<sup>th</sup> & Marion Fire Station project is progressing. Site work is currently underway.

**HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:**

- As of December 30<sup>th</sup>, HRC has:
  - 1,171 total rent and utility assistance applications were received (an addition of 37 applications since last reported).
    - 1,107 applications for rental assistance
      - 716 applicants were facing eviction
      - 299 applicants were not actively facing eviction
      - 106 applicants resided outside of the City but within the County.
    - 64 applications for utility assistance
- The Rental Assistance and Utility Assistance Programs have helped 283 city families. The total assistance comes in at a monetary amount of \$1,090,585.14.
- Hardship Funds have assisted 221 city homeowners in the monetary amount of \$48,397.30.

**LIBRARY:**

- The Reading Public Library has a new Executive Director. Ms. Melissa Adams joined the Library team and City Executive staff in mid-December. We want to give her a warm welcome, and we look forward to sharing her updates as she leads our public libraries.

The managing director added that

- The IT Help Desk handled 521 Help Tickets over the past month
- City personnel are receiving training on the new Tyler Munis software
- Noted the receipt of DCNR and PennDOT grants
- The hiring of 18 police officers – 9 entering field training and 9 entering the Academy
- The appointment of Kyle Zeiber as Acting Public Works Director
- Buttonwood Gateway kickoff meeting – City substructure and streetscape
- Installation of a Stop Sign at North 2th and Buttonwood Streets
- Restart of the Wellness Committee

**AUDITOR'S REPORT**

City Auditor Rodriguez read the report attached to the agenda, in summary:

**Property Tax Revenue – Update as of November 30, 2021**

For the current year, the City budgeted \$24,649,055.00 for Property Taxes, which includes Property Tax Current, Property Tax Prior, Penalty & Interest, and Discount & Allowance. And as of November 30, 2021, the City has recorded about \$25 million, and this amount has already exceeded its budget target by \$365,086.15. For the same period of 2020, the City recorded about \$23.3 million, or 93% of the total amount budgeted, which is about \$1.7 less than the revenue recorded this year. However, \$178,945.00 less was budgeted for this revenue line item in 2021 than in 2020.

**Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the Period of January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020**

On December 2, 2021, the City Auditor's Office received the final audit report of the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund from the office of the Auditor General for the years of 2019 and 2020. For these

two years, there were no audit findings. The City Auditor's office worked very closely with the City Controller, Michael Oppenheimer and the Public Works Engineer, Timothy Krall in providing all the information that was needed by the State Auditor, Mr. Stoppie in order for him to be able to complete these audits.

### **Miscellaneous Updates**

On December 31, 2021, the City Fire Department received a grant from FEMA in the amount of \$983,671.82 for the assistance of the Firefighters. This fund will be used for the purchases of EMS equipment.

On January 11, 2022, the City Auditor's office will be meeting with the staff of the Finance Department to review the process flow for the daily revenue/cash receipts in the Treasurer Department with the purpose of conducting an audit in that department in the near future. As we all know, the Treasurer's department records most of the revenue that the City receives and makes all the transfers that are needed in order for the City to pay bills, payroll, etc.

### **REPORT FROM DEPT. DIRECTORS, BOARDS, AUTHORITIES, & COMMISSIONS**

None.

### **ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE**

**A. Bill No. 96-2021** – amending Chapter 23, Section 101, of the City Code by changing the number of members of the Planning Commission from five to seven members ***Introduced at the December 13 regular meeting; Tabled at the December 27 regular meeting***

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 96-2021.**

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to amend Bill No. 96-2021 by adding March 1, 2022 as the effective date.**

Councilor Reed noted the important role this board plays in the economic development process and the disruptions quorum problems could cause.

**The amendment to Bill No. 96-2021, adding the March 1<sup>st</sup> effective date, was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman, President - 7**

**Nays: – None 0**

**Bill No. 96-2021** was enacted, as amended, by the following vote:

**Yeas:** Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman,  
President - 7

**Nays:** None - 0

**B. Bill No. 106-2021** – amending the City Code Chapter 23 Part 1201 Downtown Revitalization Public Private Partnership *Introduced at the December 13 regular meeting; tabled at the December 27 regular meeting*

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to table Bill No. 106-2021.

**Bill No. 106-2021** was tabled by the following vote:

**Yeas:** Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman,  
President - 7

**Nays:** None - 0

**C. Bill No. 1-2022** – allocating \$3M in APRA funding to First Energy Stadium for the required stadium improvements *Introduced at the December 27 regular meeting*

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 1-2022.

Councilor Reed stated that this funding partnership between the City, County, State and Reading Phils organization will enable the required MLB improvements to the stadium and enhance the stadium's ability to handle additional off season social events. She noted the positive economic impact the Stadium and the Fightin's have on our community.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed, noting her support for this ARPA allocation.

Council President Waltman thanked the Fightin Phils organization for developing the partnership that enabled this improvement project.

**Bill No. 1-2022** was enacted by the following vote:

**Yeas:** Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman,  
President - 7

**Nays:** – None 0

**D. Bill No. 2-2022** – authorizing a budget amendment for unscheduled demolitions by Transferring \$152,000 from Finance IT to CD Trades *Introduced at the December 27 regular*

*meeting*

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Ventura, to enact Bill No. 2-2022.

Bill No. 2-2022 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman,

President - 7

Nays: None - 0

**E. Bill No. 3-2022** – authorizing a budget amendment to cover Self Insurance expenses through the end of 2021 - Liability Claims in the amount of \$155,200.00; Premium Payments in the amount of \$101,100.00 and Other Insurance Premium in the amount of \$63,700.00; funded by an increase in Transfer from Fund Balance budget line item in the amount of \$320,000.00 ***Introduced at the December 27 regular meeting***

Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 3-2022.

Bill No. 3-2022 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman,

President - 7

Nays: None - 0

**F. Bill No. 4-2022** – authorizing budget transfer of \$100,000.00 from Sidewalk Repair/Replacement to Solid Waste to provide a funding incentive to assist with costs incurred to construct and or purchase approved screening for dumpsters and trash receptacles located in the right of way, as per the newly enacted dumpster ordinance ***Introduced at the December 27 regular meeting***

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz, to enact Bill No. 4-2022.

Bill No. 4-2022 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman,

President - 7

Nays: None - 0

**G. Bill No. 5-2022** – amending the 2022 Position Ordinance as per the Mayor to reflect a change to the title of the position of Executive Assistant in the Mayor's Office to Special Assistant and to reflect an increase in the base salary of the Special Assistant position from \$53,000 to \$63,652.50 per annum ***Introduced at the December 27 regular meeting***

Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz, to table Bill No. 5-2022.

Bill No. 5-2022 was tabled by the following vote:

Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 5

Nays: Tyson, Waltman, President - 2

**H. Bill No. 6-2022** – amending the City Code by creating Chapter 317 Invasive Plants and Noxious Weeds to regulate and provide guidance to landowners to responsibly control invasive plants and noxious weeds to allow the re-establishment of native plants and to implement the City’s obligations under the Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Act, 3 PA CS Section 1501 et seq.

*Introduced at the December 27 regular meeting*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Tyson, to enact Bill No. 6-2022.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz explained the detrimental impact that occurs when yard waste is dumped on public property, noting that the yard waste roots and overtakes the native plants.

Bill No. 6-2020 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Tyson, Ventura, Waltman, President - 7

Nays: None - 0

## **INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz read the following ordinances into the record:

**A. Bill No.** – amending City Code Chapter 576 Snow and Ice Emergency

**B. Bill No.** – authorizing the administration to write off the net unreimbursed cost allocations recorded between the General Fund and the City’s Water Fund where the City’s Water Fund was to reimburse the General Fund a net amount of \$157,636.48 will both be adjusted to zero

**C. Bill No.** – amending City Code Chapter 5, Part 202 General Provisions by adding the Third Class City Code requirement for council members to be sworn into office within 14 days of the organization meeting

**D. Bill No.** – – directing the Berks County Board of Elections to place a referendum question before city voters on the 2022 Primary Election Ballot which would amend the City of Reading Home Rule Charter by eliminating the requirement for the City’s Public Works Director to be a civil engineer

## **RESOLUTIONS**

None

## **COUNCIL COMMENT**

Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz questioned the status of the City's exploration of being eligible to become a Second Class City. The managing director stated that Mr. Mann from PFM will be making a presentational to Council in February. He noted that the Second Class City designation does not bring many benefits to Home Rule cities.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Public Works for doing an awesome job addressing the snow and slick roadways over the past few days.

Councilor Reed expressed condolences to the families affected by the fatal fires in the Bronx and Philadelphia. She stressed the need for sound and regular safety and code inspections at rental properties.

**Councilor Tyson moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.**

*Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk*