

**City of Reading City Council  
Hybrid Regular Meeting  
December 13, 2021  
At the conclusion of the COW Meeting**

Council President Waltman called the meeting to order at approximately 8 pm.

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 Chaplain Jim Farnsworth. All present pledged to the flag.

**ATTENDANCE**

Council President Waltman - electronically  
Councilor Sihelnik, District 1 - electronically  
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2 – electronically  
Councilor Ventura, District 3 – electronically  
Councilor Marmarou, District 4 – in person  
Councilor Reed, District 5 – electronically  
Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz, District 6 – electronically  
Council Solicitor M. Gombar - electronically  
Asst. Solicitor I. Litvinov– electronically  
City Clerk L. Kelleher – in person  
Auditor M. Rodriguez – electronically  
Mayor E. Moran  
Managing Director A. Amoros

Council President Waltman announced that an executive session was held prior to the start of the December 6<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting on the settlement of the recycling litigation.

**PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

City Council issued a commendation recognizing Brad Waples and the Art the Block project.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council President Waltman announced that there are a total of four (4) citizens who are registered to comment on agenda and non-agenda matters. The City Clerk stated that three (3) of the citizens are not present electronically or in person and the remaining comment was submitted in written form to be read by Councilor Reed.

**Ernie Schlegel, Chair of the Reading Redevelopment Authority (RRA), of Pear Street,** thanked the administration for allocating \$1.5M in ARPA funding for land bank funding for the RRA. He stated that this seed funding will empower the RRA to make a strong start to improve the housing in the City and improve the overall tax base which will assist the City, County and School District. He asked City Council to approve this allocation. *(The message is attached in full)*

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

Council President Waltman called Council's attention to the agenda, including the legislation on the Consent Agenda, the minutes from the November 22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Meeting and the December 6<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting, and the meeting summaries from the COWs held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup> and the December 6<sup>th</sup> Nominations Meeting.

**The minutes from the November 22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Meeting and the December 6<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting, the agenda, including the legislation on the Consent Agenda, and the summations of discussion listed were approved by acclimation.**

## **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 acclimation 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. Resolution 104-2021** – authorizing the Solicitor to execute the forms to approve the Repository Bids on 414 Little Maple St, 414 A Little Maple St, 631 Mulberry St and Monroe St

**B. Award of Contract** – for the Penn Street Courtyard Project to Doug Lamb Construction, Elizabethtown, PA in the amount of \$564,040.00

**C. Resolution 105-2021**– authorizing the settlement of the recycling litigation

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

The mayor highlighted his community activities and events since November 22<sup>nd</sup> and he described the four (4) part Mental Health Forum he is holding for community members.

The managing director read the report attached to the agenda, as follows:

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**

- The Community Development Department met with the new owner of former Luden's building on the 200 block of North 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The CEO and CFO of Fashion Apparel Industries will develop the facility into an apparel distribution center, which will create 100-120 new jobs. The City will continue to work with them on possible grants or low-interest loans.
- The CD Department's Property Maintenance Division conducted the following since the last report:
  - 536 Property Inspections
    - 154 units passed inspection
    - 155 units failed inspection
    - 48 property owners/managers rescheduled the inspection
    - 11 units were found to be illegal
    - 168 units were re-inspected for previous violations and passed
  - 91 Quality of Life (QOL) citations
    - The majority of violations were:
      - Trash/Garbage accumulation
      - High grass and weeds
      - Improper storage of trash receptacles in front/rear yards
- The CD Department continues to meet with interested developers. CD is currently in the process of finalizing approvals for a merchandise delivery service store at 600 Spring Street. Once all approvals are finalized, the company's mission is to allow customers to order products online or from a kiosk, and for a flat-rate fee, they will fill your order from their fulfillment center and deliver it to your door. This will allow our residents with limited means of transportation or busy professionals quick access to products they need in a fast, convenient way.

**FINANCE:**

- The Finance Department's Customer Service Center mailed notices to all business owners with unpaid business license fees. Any outstanding fees will be forwarded to the City's delinquent fee collector by next month.
- The Finance Department's CSC assisted PW's Solid Waste Division in creating a report based on the Berks County Tax Duplicate that includes lots (parcels of lands without buildings) in the city.
- The Finance Department's CSC, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, is organizing the City's long-standing tradition of hosting a holiday party for a Reading School District elementary school. City employees pick student names from a tree to purchase gifts that will be given to the children by Santa at City Hall on Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. This year's students are from Millmont Elementary School.
- The Finance Department's Purchasing Division recently awarded the American Rescue Plan Grants Management, Accounting, and Compliance Service to Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC.
- The Finance Department's Purchasing Division has begun scheduling walking tours with interested parties for the Penn Square Properties RFQ. A reminder that proposals for this project are due by the January 14, 2022 deadline.

**FIRE:**

- On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Fire Department assisted in the arrival of Santa on a fire apparatus to the opening night of Christmas on the Mountain holiday event.

## **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:**

- As of December 6<sup>th</sup>, HRC has:
  - 1134 total rent and utility assistance applications were received (an addition of 20 applications since last reported).
    - 1072 applications for rental assistance
      - 685 applicants were facing eviction
      - 296 applicants were not actively facing eviction
      - 105 applicants resided outside of the City but within the County.
    - 62 applications for utility assistance

## **LIBRARY:**

- The Reading Public Library's Community Engagement Coordinator, Daniel Egusquiza, was named to the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. In addition, he is also working with National Leadership and Education from the Center for Community Progress. This national organization works to address vacant and abandoned spaces and turn them into vibrant places.
- On December 8<sup>th</sup>, the Berks County District Attorney presented the RPL with a \$55,000 check from drug forfeiture funds to cover half of the cost of a new security camera system at all four library branches. The other half of the project will be covered by the 2022 CIP budget.
- The RPL has filled two of the four vacant library positions: Interlibrary Loan Coordinator and Older Adults Outreach Coordinator. The Library is still looking to hire the:
  - Youth Services Coordinator for the Northeast Branch
  - District Consultant

If anyone is interested or knows someone interested, please direct them to the Library's Main Branch on South 5<sup>th</sup> Street or website.

## **POLICE:**

- The Reading Police Department conducted successful deployments for the City's Holiday Parade and Holiday Tree and Menorah Lighting Celebrations. No major incidents were reported during either event.
- The new 12 hours shift MOU was approved by the FOP and will commence on January 3, 2022. This change will increase shift staffing levels.
- The RPD's Reading Youth Police Academy will be sending out acceptance letters to 45 interested individuals. The Youth Academy is set to begin in January 2022.

## **PUBLIC WORKS:**

- Public Works received successful dam inspections from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).
- Public Works received a traffic report on traffic signals at dangerous intersections. The only intersection that was identified to need a signal was North 4<sup>th</sup> and Court Streets. Also, various ramps will require construction to make them ADA-compliant. Other intersections will require four-way stops.
- The RPL is currently seeking applicants for three positions: District Consultant, Outreach Coordinator to Older Adults, and Part-time Interlibrary Loan Coordinator. Please share this information with any person or organization that may help in filling these vacancies.
- The RPL's Staff Development Day was held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Doubletree Hotel. The event included training sessions, keynote speaker Travis Berger, an Assistant Professor of Business and Leadership at Alvernia University, and the traditional bake-off contest among library staff.

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Auditor read the report attached to the agenda, as follows:

### **Business Privilege Tax and Business Privilege Revenue Update - October 31, 2021**

For the current year, the City budgeted \$1,466,400.00 in revenue for Business Privilege Tax and Business Privilege Tax Prior. And as of October 31, 2021, the City's combined revenue recorded for these two line items was \$1,721,744.87. However, \$624,500.00 less in revenue was budgeted in 2021 compared to 2020 for these line items, about \$45,000 more in revenue has been recorded in 2021 compared to 2020. And as of October 31, 2021, these line items have already exceeded their budget target by \$255,344.87.

The following chart explains revenue YTD comparison 2021 vs 2020

|                                | 2021<br>Budget      | YTD<br>10/31/2021   | Variance          | 2020<br>Budget      | YTD<br>10/31/2020   | Variance            |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Business Privilege Tax</b>  | 1,385,600.00        | 1,662,573.16        | 276,973.16        | 1,877,750.00        | 1,623,946.17        | (253,803.83)        |
| <b>Bus Priv Tax Prior Year</b> | 80,800.00           | 59,171.71           | (21,628.29)       | 213,150.00          | 52,680.07           | (160,469.93)        |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>1,466,400.00</b> | <b>1,721,744.87</b> | <b>255,344.87</b> | <b>2,090,900.00</b> | <b>1,676,626.24</b> | <b>(414,273.76)</b> |

### **Per Capita Tax and Per Capita Tax Prior Revenue Update – October 31, 2021**

For 2021, the administration budgeted \$450,000 in revenue for Per Capita Tax and Per Capita Tax Prior. And as of October 31, 2021, \$467,788.88 in revenue has been recorded, so these two line items have already exceeded their 2021 budget target by almost \$18,000. Even though \$140,000 more in revenue was budgeted in 2021 for the line item of Per Capita Tax Prior compared to 2020, \$197,278.60 of the \$200,000 budgeted amount for 2021 has already been recorded as of October 31, 2021 for this line item.

The following chart explains revenue YTD comparison 2021 vs 2020

|                             | 2021<br>Budget    | YTD<br>10/31/2021 | Variance         | 2020<br>Budget    | YTD<br>10/31/2020 | Variance          |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Per Capita Tax</b>       | 250,000.00        | 270,510.28        | 20,510.28        | 275,000.00        | 261,736.61        | (13,263.39)       |
| <b>Per Capita Tax Prior</b> | 200,000.00        | 197,278.60        | (2,721.40)       | 60,000.00         | 230,115.13        | 170,115.13        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>450,000.00</b> | <b>467,788.88</b> | <b>17,788.88</b> | <b>335,000.00</b> | <b>491,851.74</b> | <b>156,851.74</b> |

### **Rental – Parking Authority (RPA) Revenue Update - 2021**

Effective March 1, 2021, the City of Reading and the Reading Parking Authority entered into an agreement where the Reading Parking Authority will make an annual payment to the City in the

amount of \$1,761,000.00. Although the City only originally budgeted \$508,900.00 in revenue for this line item for 2021, as of September 30, 2021, the City has already received \$1,027,250.00 from the RPA as a result of the agreement. And this amount only reflects the payments from March through September of this year. The 2022 budget reflects a more accurate budget for this line item because it has incorporated the annual payment that will be received from the Reading Parking Authority.

## **2021 Audit**

On December 16, 2021, the Finance Department and the City Auditor Office will meet with Herbein + Company for the purpose of planning the 2021 Audit.

The Auditor noted that the State recently completed audits of the 2019-20 Liquid Fuels funding. The reports will be distributed when they are submitted.

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

Stacy Keppen, Reading Housing Authority (RHA) Executive Director, stated that approximately 7% of the City's population is provided with RHA assisted housing or one of the organization's programs. She stated that the largest RHA public housing developments provide 1,800 units with various social services. The RHA housing voucher program serves approximately 1,900 individuals and additional COVID funding has increased the availability of the vouchers for those in need. She added that in addition the RHA provides 600 rental units. She described how those served by the RHA were negatively impacted by COVID.

Ms. Keppen stated that the RHA's plan is to continue to make improvements to their properties, increase self-sufficiency programs for their residents, increase the availability of social service programs and continue to improve technology.

Councilor Sihelnik commended the RHA for their work and services, noting the benefits of having the Oakbrook development located within the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked the RHA for their work within the Reading community and the great condition of their housing units.

Councilor Reed agreed with the benefit provided by the RHA services and noted their positive presence in the Glenside area.

Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz questioned how the City can provide support to the RHA. She congratulated the RHA on the use of the existing resident councils at their developments. Ms. Keppen stated that the City can help by informing the community about the vast number of services the RHA provides to the community.

## **ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE**

**A. Bill 75-2021** – amending the Code of Ordinances Chapter 62 New Officers and Employees Pension Fund, Section 102 to prohibit the participation of new members where the employee is hired or rehired on or after January 1, 2022 ***Introduced at the September 27 regular meeting; Tabled at the October 11, 25, and Nov 8 regular meetings***

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz, to enact Bill No. 75- 2021.**

The managing director explained that this bill is a partner to the new defined contribution plan for new non-uniformed employees hired after January 1, 2022. The bill prevents an employee who is rehired after January 1, 2022 from going into the defined contribution (pension) program.

**The motion to enact Bill No 75-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**  
**Nays: None – 0**

**B. Bill 85-2021** – authorizing a budget transfer in the amount of \$60,000 from Solid Waste Contracted Services to Recycling Contracted Services to cover the increase in tipping fees through the end of 2021 ***Introduced at the November 22 regular meeting***

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Ventura, to enact Bill No. 85- 2021.**

**The motion to enact Bill No 85-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**  
**Nays: None – 0**

**C. Bill 86-2021** – authorizing a budget transfer in the amount of \$12,500 within the Fire Department to cover unanticipated fuel costs in the EMS budget ***Introduced at the November 22 regular meeting***

**Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Sihelnik, to enact Bill No. 86- 2021.**

**The motion to enact Bill No 86-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**  
**Nays: None – 0**

**D. Bill 87-2021** – amend City Code Chapter 496, Part 1 Dumpster Placement with a rewrite that requires the annual permitting for permanent dumpsters/toters within the public right of way, screening of all dumpsters/toters, requiring weekly collection from such dumpsters/toters and using any revenue realized for the expansion of the Clean City program ***Introduced at the November 22 regular meeting***

**Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 87- 2021.**

**The motion to enact Bill No 87-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**

**Nays: None – 0**

**E. Bill 88-2021** – 2022 Real Estate Tax Rate ***Introduced at the Oct 4 Special Meeting***

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Sihelnik, to enact Bill No. 88- 2021.**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the tax rate remains the same for 2022. She stated that the public is invited to view the final budget located on the website.

**The motion to enact Bill No 88-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**

**Nays: None – 0**

**F. Bill 89-2021** – 2022 Non-Resident EIT Tax Rate ***Introduced at the Oct 4 Special Meeting***

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 89- 2021.**

Council President Waltman stated that the Commuter tax rate will remain the same.

**The motion to enact Bill No 89-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**



Nays: None – 0

**G. Bill 90-2021** – 2022 Position Ordinance *Introduced at the Oct 4 Special Meeting*

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Sihelnik, to enact Bill No. 90- 2021.**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that the Position Ordinance review and modification process is part of the City’s annual budget process.

**The motion to enact Bill No 90-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 6**

**Nays: Cepeda-Freytiz – 1**

**H. Bill 91-2021** – 2022 General Fund Budget *Introduced at the Oct 4 Special Meeting*

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 91- 2021.**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz described the process used to review and modify the budget, noting that the budget is a plan that is adjusted throughout the fiscal year.

Councilor Reed, noting the lengthy discussion during the previous COW meeting, stated that she understands the questions raised by Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz to help her gain a better understanding about the budget.

Councilor Sihelnik stated that the budget review is a challenging process and she thanked Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz for leading Council through the process that started in October. She also thanked the administration for their responsiveness.

**The motion to enact Bill No 91-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 6**

**Nays: Cepeda-Freytiz – 1**

**I. Bill 92-2021** – 2022 Capital Fund Budget *Introduced at the Oct 4 Special Meeting*

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to enact**

**Bill No. 92- 2021.**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the work to compile this complex plan and the challenge to complete the projects in the plan.

Councilor Sihelnik stated that the greater challenge is for the administration to prioritize the projects and move them forward for execution. She stated that having a narrow scope on a priority list will ease the work to execute the projects selected.

**The motion to enact Bill No 92-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**

**Nays: None – 0**

**J. Bill 93-2021 – ARPA Plan *Introduced at the Oct 4 Special Meeting***

**Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to table Bill No. 93- 2021.**

**The motion to table Bill No 93-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**

**Nays: None – 0**

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES**

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

**A. Ordinance** – amending the 2021 Capital Improvement Fund Budget by providing \$30,000.00 in funding needed to cover the cost of the patrol equipment/armory project.

**B. Ordinance** – amending Chapter 23, Section 101, of the City Code by changing the number of members of the Planning Commission from five to seven members

**C. Ordinance** – amending the City Code Chapter 396 Parks and Recreation, Part 3 Park Use, Section 305 Rules of Conduct to prohibit the dumping of yard waste in City parks, playgrounds, preserves and public spaces

**D. Ordinance** – amending the City Code Chapter 496 Solid Waste Part 2 Storage and Collection to clarify that yard waste is collected by the City at no extra fee for residents

**E. Ordinance** – amending City Code Chapter 212, Part 136. Curbside waste collection setting

the fees for 2022 as follows:

| <b>Description</b>  | <b>Fee</b>                              | <b>Code Citation</b>    |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Municipal waste collection fee, all services ( <b>trash, recycling, clean city*</b> ) | <del>\$270</del> <b><u>\$330.00</u></b> | § 496-203               |
| Municipal waste collection fee, all services with senior discount                     | <del>\$135</del> <b><u>\$165.00</u></b> | § 496-203<br>§ 496-207A |
| Municipal waste collection fee, recycling*  | <del>\$90</del> <b><u>\$69.40</u></b>   | § 496-208               |
| Purchase of <b>additional</b> recycling cart, 65 gallon or similar                    | <del>\$43</del> <b><u>\$60</u></b>      | § 496-207A              |
| Purchase of <b>additional</b> recycling cart, 35 gallon or similar                    | <del>\$36</del> <b><u>\$50</u></b>      | § 496-207A              |
| Appeal fee  | \$100                                   | § 496-207               |

**F. Ordinance** – authorizing the sale of 623 Wool Alley to John H. Miller and/or Real Food Farm LLC, for \$500.00

**G. Ordinance** – authorizing the required construction easements to PennDOT for the rebuilding of the Schuylkill Avenue Railroad Bridge; PennDOT Project SR 183-05B

**H. Ordinance** – amending the 2021 Capital Improvement Fund Budget Ordinance is hereby Amended by providing \$500,000.00 in funding to cover the cost of the Schlegel Park Pool project.

**I. Ordinance** – amending 2021 Capital Improvement Fund Budget by transferring \$200,000.00 to the LED Lighting Project Fund

**J. Ordinance** – authorizing the transfer of \$40,000 from the Public Works Admin Contracted Services to Maintenance Repair Street Lights for the purpose of year end Street Lighting repairs.

**K. Ordinance** – authorizing the transfer of \$50,000 from the Public Works Admin Contracted Services to Contracted Services providing unforeseen maintenance and repair to public facilities

**L. Ordinance** – amending the City Code Chapter 23 Part 1201 Downtown Revitalization Public Private Partnership

## RESOLUTIONS

**A. Resolution 106-2021**– appointing Rogelio Flores, a Mayoral appointment, to the Youth Commission

**B. Resolution 107-2021** – appointing Mark Cianciosi to the Code & License Appeals Board

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to adopt Resolution Nos. 106 and 107-2021.**

**The motion to adopt Resolution Nos. 106 and 107-2021 were approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**

**Nays: None – 0**

**C. Resolution 108-2021**– denying the Conditional Use application for a temporary shelter at 238 N 6<sup>th</sup> St as per the attached resolution

**Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Ventura, to adopt Resolution No. 108-2021, denying the Conditional Use application for 238 N 6<sup>th</sup> St.**

**The motion to adopt Resolution No. 108-2021 was approved by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Cepeda-Freytiz, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Ventura, Sihelnik, Waltman, President – 7**

**Nays: None – 0**

## **COUNCIL COMMENT**

Councilor Reed noted the showing of the original “It’s a Wonderful Life” film free of charge at the Goggleworks over the past weekend. She expressed hope that this film could be shown annually. She also highlighted the wonderful community events available to the public such as Christmas on the Mountain, the downtown tree lighting ceremony, the Centre Park Mansions Tour, etc. She noted the upcoming dedication of two (2) historical markers at 5<sup>th</sup> and Washington and 5<sup>th</sup> and Cherry this Thursday at 10 am.

Councilor Sihelnik gave a shout-out to Bill Palmertree for his work to hang the holiday banners on the Penn Street Bridge and to Ms. Mathews, a senior and Jr ROTC student at Reading High School for her volunteerism. She congratulated Colletowne for getting their 2<sup>nd</sup> RACP application approved. She thanked the Youth Commission members and those who provide assistance to help the Commission move forward.

Councilor Sihelnik thanked the administration for providing funding to complete the Schlegel Park pool. Noting her hope that the pool will be open this summer. She announced that her last In Your District program is scheduled for December 23<sup>rd</sup> and she will be

reflecting over the past four (4) years.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the Jewish Federation's plan to add music to the Hanukkah services next year. She announced that Christmas caroling in District 2 is being held tomorrow evening by the Fairview Mennonite Church. She asked all to consult with the Pagoda Facebook page to learn about upcoming events.

The mayor stated that his 3<sup>rd</sup> Mental Health Forum on grief is scheduled for this week. He announced the community meeting on the ARPA funding this Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at the Children's Home.

Council President Waltman reviewed the upcoming Council meeting schedule.

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

*Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk*

**From:** ERNEST SCHLEGEL [mailto:schmeegl60@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Monday, December 13, 2021 12:33 PM

**To:** City Council <citycouncildist@readingpa.gov>; Linda Kelleher <Linda.Kelleher@readingpa.gov>; wellingtonsantana69@gmail.com; FRANKLYN'S <franklyn58@comcast.net>; naterivera19@gmail.com; Tom Caltagirone <trc127@yahoo.com>; M A. Krishock <MAKrishock@bingamanhess.com>

**Subject:** Fund 47

**WARNING:** This email originated from outside the system

DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Councilwoman Reed, Can you please read this into the record at this evening's Council meeting?

Esteemed members of Council:

Reading Redevelopment Authority writes to thank the Administration for the allocation of 1.5 million dollars from the ARPA monies to RRA, particularly the startup of a Landbank.

This funding will go a long way as we move towards the development of the Landbank and is empowering us to move to development levels not seen in generations in the City of Reading.

The truth of the matter is that the stimulus dollars that are being talked about both through the American Rescue Plan and what the federal government is working on now are just really, really big numbers compared to what we've seen in the past.

This is a huge infusion for an agency whose total budget — operating plus capital — has hovered around \$300,00 in recent years.

We have a lot of different goals that we really want to achieve, but we were so limited on resources for a while that we couldn't make progress as fast as we wanted to.

As the Covid-19 created a crisis for our country, Congress answered with important resources such as funding through ARPA, and that in turn helps us change course in a crisis we have had in the city for some time regarding community development.

For far too long RRA worked with its head down getting the work done as best they could, and they were forgetting to come up for air" to engage with others.

We have changed that course, and this is a step in many steps as we stay the course with synergy, working together to make the city a place to work visit and play.

We ask City Council to approve the Fund 47 appropriation this evening.

Thanks,

Ernest Herbein Schlegel, Chairman, RRA