

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2007**

A regular meeting of City Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business.

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council, called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Deputy Clerk Chris Kanezo.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Spencer
Councilor Fuhs, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Baez, District 5
Councilor Waltman, District 6

Managing Director L. Churchill
City Solicitor C. Younger
City Clerk L. Kelleher
Public Works Director C. Jones

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no proclamations or presentations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Spencer announced that one citizen was registered to address Council on a non-agenda topic. He suggested that Council suspend the public speaking rules to allow the citizen to address the group at this time. No one objected, therefore, the public speaking rules were suspended.

Ruth Martelli, of Palm Street, described the parking problems experienced by the Reading Community Players group and requested permission for the group to use a lot in City Park during their events. The Reading

Community Players is located in the 400 block of N. 11th Street. She added that similar problems are experienced by Genesis Theater.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Council President Spencer called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting and the minutes from the regular meeting held on February 12, 2007.

Managing Director Churchill announced the Administration's request to withdraw two ordinances for introduction – the Solid Waste Ordinance and the Housing Permit Ordinance.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Fuhs, to adopt the agenda as amended and approve the minutes from the February 12, 2007 regular meeting of Council. The motion was approved unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Managing Director Churchill highlighted the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering:

- EMS Tax Reforms
- a summary of a meeting held with Federal and State agencies, State and Federal officials to discuss violence.

Councilor Fuhs inquired if any other City officials attended the meeting described in the report. Managing Director Churchill stated that he attended in representation of the Mayor.

Councilor Fuhs inquired about the rationale behind excluding the City's legislative body from this meeting. He also inquired about the Administration's speedy decision to employ a camera system in downtown Reading. Managing Director Churchill replied that the camera system was announced in Chief Heim's Crime Plan as a priority for 2007. He stated that the camera system along with the planned street lighting project is intended to improve the environment in Downtown Reading.

Councilor Fuhs reminded the Managing Director of the need to discuss these projects with Council prior to their public presentation. He inquired about the cost of operation and maintenance of the camera system.

Managing Director Churchill replied that operational and maintenance costs will be absorbed by the general fund budget in 2008.

Councilor Baez stated that she learned about this meeting when a constituent asked her why she did not attend the meeting. She inquired how the Administration could portray the camera system as a City priority before first discussing the issue with City Council. Managing Director Churchill replied that no disrespect was intended. The camera system was presented to regional elected officials as the City would be seeking financial assistance from them.

Council President Spencer stated that he learned about the meeting after receiving telephone calls from some constituents on the day of the meeting. He stated that he was told that Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz was invited to the meeting by Commissioner Schwank. He questioned the ability of the meeting to be closed as two County Commissioners were present.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she was not invited by Commissioner Schwank. She stated that the Mayor invited her to represent him as he would be on vacation on the day of the meeting. She stated that federal officials testified about programs that could assist the City. She noted that she did specifically ask Albert Boscov to invite the body of Council to this session. She stated that the proposed camera project was discussed at the February 21 Mayor's meeting.

Councilor Marmarou agreed that Council should be included in any meeting where City priorities are discussed. He noted his work to secure private funds for the installation of a camera system in downtown Reading.

Councilor Sterner agreed that the Mayor discussed the proposed camera project at several Mayor's meetings noting his intention to present this project to the full body of Council. He inquired how the City intends to cover the cost of the initial phase of the camera project (\$400,000). Managing Director Churchill stated that the Administration will be seeking approval for a budget amendment.

Councilor Sterner noted several complaint calls concerning the condition of the City Hall roof which has caused leaks in several areas within the building. Public Works Director Jones stated that the roof condition was assessed during the fall of 2006 and it is believed that the spring repair will correct the damage.

Councilor Waltman stated that he learned about the meeting when reading an article in the Reading Eagle which presented the gathering as a crime forum. He inquired how many officials attended the meeting. Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz replied that about 30-40 people were in attendance. She stated that she was invited a few days in advance.

Councilor Waltman expressed the belief that the City's legislative body needs to play a role in relaying the City's needs to State and Federal officials. He also agreed with the need to address the criminal element; however, he restated his opinion that a stronger impact could be achieved through stronger enforcement focus on codes, housing, and quality of life issues.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz again stated that Albert Boscov arranged this meeting. When she was invited to represent the Mayor she did suggest to Mr. Boscov that other Councilors be invited.

Councilor Fuhs reminded all that City Councilors are elected to provide direct representation of Reading citizens. Meetings of these types need to be attended by those who represent the citizenry.

Council President stated his discomfort with the quasi Council meetings that occur with the Mayor each week behind closed doors. He expressed the belief that too often the conversation strays into areas that should be addressed to the full body at a regular meeting, work session, or committee meeting. He agreed with addressing only District concerns at these meetings and suggested that the group steer clear about discussing issues that require consideration of the body. He stated that it is hard for him to understand how the City's legislative body could be excluded from a meeting of this importance. He also wondered how the Administration will present the camera project with an estimated cost before the issue is considered and agreed to by the body of Council at a regular meeting, committee meeting, or work session.

Managing Director Churchill stated that he will update Council at the March Finance Committee meeting as the Administration plans to propose a budget amendment at the March 12, 2007 Council meeting.

Councilor Waltman stressed the need for the Administration to avoid similar situations in the future.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the meeting also included discussion on the Route 222 corridor project. She offered to write a report on the topics discussed at this meeting.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Council President Spencer stated that the City Auditor is absent this evening due to the passing of his father, Walter Cituk. He expressed condolences to Mr. Cituk and his family.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

Bill No. 15-2007 - establishing a Fire Diversity Board (**Solicitor**)
Introduced at the 02/12/07 meeting of Council; discussed at the 02/12/07 and 02/26/07 Committee of the Whole meeting

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Fuhs, to enact Bill 15-2007.

Managing Director Churchill stated that the establishment of the Fire Diversity Board is a product of a federal lawsuit similar to the one which created the Police Diversity Board. He stated these two boards stress the need for diverse hiring in the Police and Fire Departments.

Councilor Waltman stated that he will support the enactment of this ordinance. He questioned the real need for a lawsuit to address this issue. He described some of the difficulties with the settlement agreement that created the Police Diversity Board. He highlighted the need for across the board representation when parties are appointed to the Fire Diversity Board.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed with the need for diversity hiring but expressed the belief that the ultimate issue could have been handled more effectively.

Bill 15-2007 was enacted by the following vote:

Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.

Nay: None – 0.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Council President Spencer read the following Ordinances into the record:

Ordinance- adopting a storm water management plan **(Public Works)**

Ordinance- amending the City of Reading Codified Ordinances by regulating advertisements for the sale of real estate in the City of Reading **(Waltman/Goodman-Hinnershitz)**

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 29-2007 - authorizing the Reading Regional Airport Authority to enter into an agreement with the Berks County Industrial Development Authority for the sale of property **(Councilman Fuhs) Tabled at the 02/12/07 meeting of Council; discussed at the 02/26/07 Committee of the Whole**

Resolution 29-2007 was withdrawn by Councilman Fuhs.

Resolution 36-2007 - authorizing the Mayor to enter into a settlement with the Fire Diversity Board **(Solicitor) Tabled at the 02/12/07 meeting of Council; discussed at the 02/26/07 Committee of the Whole**

Councilor Waltman moved, seconded by Councilor Baez, to adopt Resolution 36-2007.

Resolution 36-2007 was adopted by the following vote:

Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.

Nay: None – 0.

Resolution 37-2007 - appointing Sandy Hummel as Acting Human Resources Director **(Council Staff/Solicitor)**

Councilor Baez moved, seconded by Councilor Waltman, to adopt Resolution 37-2007.

There was discussion on the appointment period for acting directors. Ms. Kelleher stated that this requirement is in the Administrative Code not the Charter. She noted that the official appointment period is to last no more than 180 days followed by 90 day extension periods approved by Council. She explained the Ordinance was crafted in this manner to assure the Administration will continue moving forward with the hiring process.

Resolution 37-2007 was adopted by the following vote:

Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.

Nay: None – 0.

Resolution 38-3007 - appointing Cynthia Sopka as Zoning Administrator (**Council Staff**)

Councilor Fuhs moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to adopt Resolution 38-2007.

Managing Director Churchill noted the experience of Ms. Sopka and announced her starting salary will be \$50,000 per year.

Resolution 38-2007 was adopted by the following vote:

Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer President – 7.

Nay: None – 0.

Resolution 39-2007 - approving the transfer of Councilman Marmarou's salary (**Council Staff/Solicitor**)

Councilor Fuhs moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adopt Resolution 39-2007.

Councilor Marmarou explained his inability to draw a salary since he is a City pensioner. He requested that Council consider redirecting the salary budgeted for the District 4 representative.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the resolution does not specify a reallocation. City Solicitor Younger stated that redirection of this appropriation should be decided on by the full body of Council.

Managing Director Churchill suggested that the group discuss the reallocation further.

Councilor Fuhs moved, seconded by Councilor Waltman, to table Resolution 39-2007.

Resolution 39-2007 was tabled by the following vote:

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer
President – 6.**

Abstain: Marmarou – 1.

Nay: None – 0.

Resolution 40-2007 - retaining an independent attorney to provide legal counsel on all matters related to the proposed sale of Airport Authority property (**Waltman**)

The Resolution was withdrawn by Councilor Waltman.

Resolution 41-2007 - requesting the establishment of a comprehensive city diversity board (**Waltman**)

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to adopt Resolution 41-2007.

Councilor Waltman noted the need for one board to oversee the hiring practices of the City. He stated that the establishment of a City Diversity Board, including those involved in the Fire Diversity Board and the Police Diversity Board, will establish a comprehensive recruitment, application, and hiring procedure for all City departments.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that representatives of the City's work force be represented on this comprehensive board.

Resolution 41-2007 was adopted by the following vote:

**Yea: Baez, Fuhs, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner,
Waltman, Spencer President – 7.**

Nay: None – 0.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Sterner thanked Ms. Martelli and the Reading Community Players for their work in District 2. He noted their request for improved

street lighting in this area and announced his intent to follow up accordingly.

Councilor Waltman announced the crime watch spaghetti dinner scheduled for Saturday, March 3 and Saturday, April 14.

Councilor Baez noted the success of her Town meeting at the Oakshire Senior Community. The meeting was held in coordination with Representative Dante Santoni. She stated that over 50 people attended. She thanked the Council staff for assisting her in arranging this meeting.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the difficulty citizens have experienced with ice and snow removal. She thanked all for their tireless effort. She noted the upcoming District 2 community meetings.

Council President Spencer stated that he has sent various memos to the Administration for requesting information but he has not received any response. He asked that the Administration respond to the following:

- request for copies of Community Development report on the NEAR and RAFT programs
- request breakdown on expenditures (approximately \$240,000) for clean-up during the 2006 fiscal year including who authorized the projects and the expenditures
- request follow-up on problem property located at 521 Weiser St
- information on the upcoming Bike Race coordinated by Cindy Kauffman

Council President Spencer thanked Council staff for their comprehensive annual report. He stated that this report provides a comprehensive look at the activity of staff during the calendar year.

Council President Spencer inquired about the City's purchase of a used sign machine. Public Works Director Charlie Jones stated that the purchase of this equipment will improve the City's ability to create their own signs.

Council President Spencer inquired if the City has ever attempted to outsource this service. Public Works Director Jones replied that the department has begun to explore the possibility of outsourcing this and the line painting service.

Council President Spencer announced the meeting scheduled for the upcoming weeks.

Councilor Baez moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

LINDA A. KELLEHER
CITY CLERK