

**City of Reading City Council
Regular Business Meeting
Monday, February 11, 2013**

Council President Francis G. Acosta called the meeting to order.

Councilor Randy Corcoran gave the invocation.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Acosta
Councilor Corcoran, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Reed, District 5
Councilor Waltman, District 6
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Solicitor C. Younger
Managing Director C. Snyder
City Clerk L. Kelleher
Mayor V. Spencer

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

City Council issued the following:

- Council Commendation recognizing the RHS Dance Team, accepted by Cheryl Davis, Vice Principal and Team advisor

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Acosta announced that five citizens were registered to address Council on non-agenda matters. He inquired if any Councilor objected to suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting. As no one objected the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting was suspended. Council President Acosta reminded the citizens registered to speak about the remaining public speaking rules.

Karin Acuna of Eckert Ave., introduced the five contestants for the Miss Teen Reading pageant scheduled for March 30th at the Wyndham Lincoln.

Chris Mauger, of 409 W. Windsor St., was not present.

Mary Ann Coyle, of North Kenhorst Blvd., described the problem she has been having with erratic water billing at her property which caused the need to replace the water meter; however, the billing problems continued. She provided detail about the erratic monthly bills in a home where there are only two water consumers. She also noted that the customer service representatives at RAWA are not interested in assisting customers or helping to resolve problems in person or by phone.

Council President Acosta provided Mrs. Coyle with two additional minutes to conclude her remarks.

Ms. Coyle described the various approaches she and her husband use to reduce their water consumption and their monthly bill; however, the water bill does not reflect their water saving measures. She stated that their monthly bill runs from \$45 to \$300. She noted that a plumber could not locate a leak on the homeowner side of the water meter.

James Coyle, of North Kenhorst Blvd., continued to describe the continued problems with their erratic water bills. He noted that while he and his wife were undertaking water conservation practices, their water consumption charges continued to escalate.

Belody Ramos, representing Juan Castillo, of Chestnut Street, stated that her father works in the construction field and that he is interested in taking properties off the repository list and rehabilitating them.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Acosta called Council's attention to the minutes for the January 28th Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda for this meeting.

Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to approve the minutes from the January 28th Regular Meeting and the agenda for this meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

There was no legislation on the Consent Agenda.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Mayor Spencer read his report distributed to Council at the meeting. In summary:

- The Housing Fees Amnesty Program ends February 15th. Those with delinquencies who do not participate will enter the formal collection process.
- Implementation of the Park and Walk initiative for the police patrol
- Receipt of a grant to purchase a large baler to compact recycling products

- The need to renew the contract with Local Self Reliance

Councilor Marmarou stated that the report indicates that the Mayor's Office is coordinating clean ups in the northwest area of the City. He inquired about including District 4. Mayor Spencer stated that the clean-ups are being conducted City-wide through RBI.

Councilor Marmarou suggested that the park and walk initiative expand into the City's neighborhoods in addition to the commercial core area.

Councilor Reed inquired about the renewal of the contract with Local Self Reliance, the amount of the contract, when the contract period ends and the need for the RFP process. Mayor Spencer stated that after consulting with the Managing Director he learned that Council will need to approve the new contract after the RFP process.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired about the safe corridors grant. Mayor Spencer stated that they are exploring the availability of grants through the Grants Coordinator. Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the importance of including residential and commercial property owners on these corridors as they can provide a safe haven for school children.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council. In summary:

- Update on the 2012 Admissions Tax collection
- Update on the 4th quarter of 2012 Unemployment Compensation
- Update on the collection of the 2012 Franchise fee

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

Renee Dietrich, President of the Library Board and members of the Board, made their annual report to Council.

Ms. Dietrich stated that in 2012 the Reading Public Library:

- Expanded their E-Book collection, which greatly increased the circulation rate
- Identified maintenance issues at the library facilities
- Expanded their fundraising
- Saw a marked increase in patron visits in person and online.

Ms. Dietrich stated that in 2013 the Library Board will:

- Continue to create programs that respond to community issues

- Work with partners such as the United Way and Literacy Council
- Continue to provide assistance to those seeking entry or re-entry into the work force

Ms. Dietrich noted the Board's commitment to the community. She stated that the Library's total budget is \$2.6M that includes the \$100,000 contribution from the City. She stated that the Board looks forward to the 2013 renovation to the historic Main Branch, noting that this marks the Library's 250th anniversary and that the Reading Public Library is the 6th oldest library in the United States. She asked Council to consider increasing the annual contribution to \$200,000.

Councilor Waltman agreed with the need to increase the City's annual contribution. He explained that the City's dire financial condition created the need to dramatically reduce the annual contribution to the Library. He applauded the Library Board's fundraising efforts.

Councilor Sterner noted his appreciation for the Library Board's enthusiasm. He also agreed with the need to provide a healthier contribution to the Library annually. He stated that he is interested in providing a dedicated Library Tax, similar to the .2 mils provided to the Shade Tree Commission.

Council President Acosta noted the eloquence of Ms. Dietrich's report and the need to consider increasing the City's annual contribution to the Library.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested discussing Library funding before the preparation of the 2014 Budget. She expressed the belief that a Library Tax should be County-wide and not centered only in the City.

Councilor Reed thanked the Library Board for their fundraising efforts. She stressed the importance of private fundraising and grant research.

Mayor Spencer suggested doing a survey to obtain the public opinion of a dedicated Library Tax.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

WITHDRAWN Bill No. 6-2013 - amending an Ordinance of the City previously enacted on June 25, 2012, that authorized the incurrence of non-electoral debt through the issuance of a series of federally-taxable general obligation notes of the City in the aggregate principal amount of three million one hundred eleven thousand dollars (\$3,111,000) pursuant to the act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, known as the Local Government Unit Debt Act, 53 PA.C.S., Chapters 80-82, as amended (the "Act"), to provide funds for certain projects of the City recited therein; providing that the dates set forth in said Ordinance for the payment of principal of and interest on said notes be modified; providing for certain other amendments to said Ordinance; authorizing and directing specified officers of this City to do, take and perform certain necessary and/or appropriate acts and

things relating to such amended Ordinance; providing when this Ordinance shall become effective; providing for severability of provisions; and repealing all Ordinances or parts of Ordinances insofar as the same shall be inconsistent herewith (**Financial Solutions**) *Tabled at the January 28 regular meeting*

B. Bill No. 7 - 2013 – amending the City-wide Diversity Board ordinance (**Council Staff/HR**) *Introduced at the January 28 regular meeting*

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No 7-2013.

Managing Director Snyder stated that this amendment will modify the make-up of the board and the meeting schedule.

Councilor Waltman stated that this board was created to ensure diverse employment in City government.

Bill No. 7-2013 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: – Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta, President - 7
Nays: None -0

C. Bill No. 8 – 2013 - authorizing the execution of the Inter-municipal Sewer Agreement (IMA) with Laureldale (**Man Dir**) *Introduced at the January 28 regular meeting*

Councilor Corcoran moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No 8-2013.

Managing Director Snyder stated that the agreement, like the Muhlenberg IMA enacted in November 2012, allows outside municipalities to purchase sewage treatment services from the City.

Councilor Waltman stated that while he supports the work that went into drafting and negotiating this agreement, he will not support the enactment of this ordinance due to his disagreement with various issues within the Consent Decree.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked all for the work done to complete this task, which provides regional sewer service.

Bill No. 8-2013 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: – Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Acosta,

President - 6

Nays: Waltman - 1

D. Bill No. 9 – 2013 - amending the 2013 Position Ordinance by adding 30 firefighter positions, to comply with the SAFER Grant if it is accepted. **(Man Dir/Council Staff)**

Introduced at the January 28 regular meeting

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to table Bill No 9-2013.

Bill No. 9-2013 was tabled by the following vote:

Yeas: – Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta, President - 7

Nays: None -0

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Council President Acosta read the following ordinances into the record:

A. Ordinance - amending the CORE Guidelines to provide the option for a CORE property to be marketed and sold as an owner occupied rental **(Law)**

B. Ordinance - amending the Codified Ordinances, Chapter 1 Administrative Code, §1-122. Ordinances **(Council)**

RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution 15-2013 – reappointing Tom Lynam to the Fire and Building Code Board of Appeals **(Nom & Appts)**

B. Resolution 16-2013 – reappointing John Hill to the Fire and Building Code Board of Appeals **(Nom & Appts)**

C. Resolution 17-2013 – appointing Robert Hospidor to the Board of Health **(Nom & Appts)**

D. Resolution 18-2013 – reappointing Jeffrey Gattone to the Zoning Hearing Board **(Nom & Appts)**

E. Resolution 19-2013 – reappointing Phil Rabena to the Zoning Hearing Board **(Nom & Appts)**

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Corcoran, to adopt Resolutions No 15-19-2013.

Councilors Marmarou and Corcoran noted the skills and qualifications of those being appointed and re-appointed and noted the importance of volunteerism.

Resolutions No. 15-19-2013 were adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: – Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Acosta, President - 7

Nays: None -0

COUNCIL COMMENT

The members of Council thanked those who provided public comment this evening. They also congratulated the RHS Dance Team. They also noted that the complaint about RAWA heard this evening is not an isolated event but an event that is experienced by many RAWA customers.

Council President Acosta introduced the bi-monthly Council Corner newsletter which was electronically distributed last week. He stated that the newsletter is posted on the Council webpage and the Facebook page. He explained that the newsletter is informational and not PR based. He stated that the Council President will write articles for every issue and the District Councilors will write articles in every other issue. He encouraged citizens to read the newsletters and provide suggestions for future articles.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk