

City of Reading City Council
Regular Meeting
July 11, 2016

Council Vice President Reed called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Police Officer and Police Chaplin Christopher Bucklin

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Councilor Daubert, District 1

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2

Councilor Twyman, District 3

Councilor Marmarou, District 4

Councilor Reed, District 5

Councilor Slifko, District 6

City Auditor D. Cituk

City Solicitor C. Younger

City Clerk L. Kelleher

Managing Director G. Steckman

There were no executive sessions that occurred at the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Council Vice President Reed stated that Council President Waltman was unable to attend the meeting due to an illness.

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council Vice President Reed stated that there are five (5) citizens registered to address Council; one (1) on agenda matters and four (4) on non-agenda matters. She 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 was suspended.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that Council rule separates public comment into two periods: agenda comment at the beginning of the meeting and non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting. She noted that Council usually allows all comment at the beginning of the meeting by suspending the rules; however, Council may exercise the option to separate the agenda and non-agenda comment as it appears on each meeting agenda.

Councilor Daubert read the public speaking rules that were adopted by Council.

Evelyn Morrison, of Church Street, spoke about the appointment process for the Water Authority and she read from a memo from former mayor Spencer nominating Councilor Waltman to the board. She suggested repealing the dissolution of RAWA to avoid creating a new authority and bringing the water system back under direct City control. She also suggested that the City go into receivership at the end of the Act 47 period.

Sheila Perez, no address listed on the signup sheet, expressed the belief that the parking agreement with the Santander should be renegotiated to require the Santander to pay for parking. She stated that parking should not be provided free to this entity. She also expressed the belief that the spaces reserved for the Goggleworks and Judy's on Cherry should also pay the parking fee. She suggested that all who park should pay their fair share. She also suggested that all appointments to City Boards, Authorities and Commissions should be City residents.

Juan Zabala, no address listed on the signup sheet, gave his views on the recent nationwide incidents involving police and citizens. He suggested that Reading use the approach used by former mayor Nutter in Philadelphia which is a Citizens Judicial Committee. He suggested meeting with individual elected officials to further discuss this issue.

Wanda Negron, of Lackawanna Street, complained that her name was erroneously removed from a sign in sheet at a prior meeting. She also complained about the cleanliness of various City owned facilities that were supplied for her event. Mr. Steckman offered to discuss this issue with her after the meeting. *(Note: Ms. Negron was last registered to speak at the May 23rd Regular meeting and she did not respond when she was called to the podium)*

Romaine Schwartz, of Scott Street, stated that several years ago when the City closed an area of Margaret Street for the Housing Authority, she questioned if she would receive half of the street as her property adjoins the same area of Margaret Street; however, she never received an answer. Councilor Daubert asked Ms. Schwartz to speak with him about this issue after the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council Vice President Reed called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting and the minutes from the June 27th Regular Meeting of Council. She noted the need to amend the agenda to include the following ordinances:

1. Ordinance – authorizing the transfer of funds from the Shade Tree budget to the Minor Capital budget for the purchase of a bucket truck, authorized in the 2015 budget
2. Ordinance – authorizing the amendment of the 2016 Budget to add a PennDOT Reimbursement Grant for the Downtown Lighting Project
3. Ordinance – authorizing the addition of a budget item for the receipt of a grant from the State Fire Commissioners for the replacement of the Fire Department’s nozzle and hoses
4. Ordinance – amending City Code Chapter 496 Solid Waste, Part 1 Dumpster by amending the definitions of Trash Can, Dumpster and Trash Can and deleting the definition of Container
5. Ordinance – amending City Code Chapter 496, Part 2 Solid Waste, Section 206 Storage of Municipal Waste requiring storage in containers and defining the type of trash bag that may be used for set out
6. Ordinance – authorizing the use of the General Fund Reserve to pay off the balance of the 2010 unfunded debt bond in the amount of \$6,570,000

No one objected to the amendment of the agenda.

Councilor Daubert moved, seconded by Councilor Slifko, to approve the minutes from the June 27th Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda, as amended. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

The managing director reported that the ordinances added to the agenda relating to the budget are related to grant funded projects that were not approved with the 2016 General Fund Budget. He also reported that the administration will soon be proposing a decriminalized parking ticket system that is being used in other Pennsylvania municipalities.

AUDITOR’S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting, in summary:

- 2002-16 Real Estate Transfer Tax
- Highlights from the 2015 Parking Authority external audit

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

Cathy Curran-Myers, Chair of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), presented the EAC’s annual report. The report outlines the EAC’s goals, accomplishments; in summary:

- Completion of the Alternative Energy and Riparian Buffer zoning amendments which

were enacted by Council

- Continued work on the Steep Slope zoning amendment
- Provided comment on the draft Comprehensive Plan
- Continued education and outreach on the Rain Barrel program and regulations

Ms. Curran-Myers stated that in her first year as chair the EAC formed subcommittees composed of EAC members and citizens to address various issues. She stated that the EAC is also working on the management of storm water issues through green infrastructure. She stated that the EAC's success is due to the support and expertise of Deputy City Clerk Michelle Katzenmoyer and Utilities Division Manager Deborah Hoag. She also thanked Councilor Slifko for joining the EAC and participating in the EAC endeavors.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz applauded the EAC for their continued work. She suggested that the group consider the environmental issues created by litter and improperly disposed trash.

Councilor Slifko commended the EAC for their excellent work and commitment.

Council Vice President Reed asked for the EAC report to be provided on the City's website.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

Pending additional information required

Bill No. 2016 - creating the Reading Regional Water Authority *Introduced at the May 23 regular meeting*

Ordinance - amending the City of Reading Code of Ordinances, Chapter 600 Zoning, Section 600-2111 Telecommunications Facility Exemptions *Introduced at the June 27 regular meeting; Advertised on June 28, July 18 and 25; Public Hearing scheduled August 1*

None.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

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

A. Ordinance - authorizing Berks EIT, as the City's tax collector, to engage one or more third-party collection agencies to pursue and collect delinquent Tax and apply a fee for the use of a third-party collection agency provided that the fee does not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount of Tax collected from any such Taxpayer

B. Ordinance - authorizing the transfer of funds from the Shade Tree budget to the Minor Capital budget for the purchase of a bucket truck, authorized in the 2015 budget

C. Ordinance - authorizing the amendment of the 2016 Budget to add a PennDOT Reimbursement Grant for the Downtown Lighting Project

D. Ordinance - authorizing the addition of a budget item for the receipt of a grant from the State Fire Commissioners for the replacement of the Fire Department's nozzle and hoses

E. Ordinance - amending City Code Chapter 496 Solid Waste, Part 1 Dumpster by amending the definitions of Trash Can, Dumpster and Trash Can and deleting the definition of Container

F. Ordinance - amending City Code Chapter 496, Part 2 Solid Waste, Section 206 Storage of Municipal Waste requiring storage in containers and defining the type of trash bag that may be used for set out

G. Ordinance - authorizing the use of the General Fund Reserve to pay off the balance of the 2010 unfunded debt bond in the amount of \$6,570,000

RESOLUTIONS

None.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Marmarou expressed the belief that the problems in District 4 are created by off campus student housing in residential neighborhoods. He noted that some landlords and property owners have learned to skate around the City student home regulations, which has forced a number of long term residents to move out of the City.

Councilor Daubert commended Mr. Zabala for his recommendation for a Citizens Judicial Committee. He agreed to meet with Mr. Zabala.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the sadness caused by the various police related incidents nationwide. She suggested that people work to identify solutions that peacefully support law enforcement and first responders. She described the success of the Reutlingen delegation's visit to Reading/Kutztown last week. She also reminded District 2 residents about the contest for the best outdoor maintenance.

Council Vice President Reed stated that Council was honored to attend the Police Department Roll Call last Friday with the Police Chief. She thanked Mr. Zabala for his suggestion. She also reminded everyone about the Reading Pride event scheduled for this Sunday in Centre Park.

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

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk