

**City of Reading City Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**September 12, 2016**

Council President Waltman called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Rev. John Francis from Christ Episcopal Church.

All present pledged to the flag.

**ATTENDANCE**

Council President J. Waltman

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

Mayor W. Scott

There were two (2) executive sessions on litigation at the Committee of the Whole meeting.

**PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

The Mayor issued a Proclamation declaring October 1<sup>st</sup> as Marc Anthony Day. The proclamation was accepted by David Farrar, General Manager of the Santander Center.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council President Waltman stated that there are 15 citizens registered to address Council, five (5) on agenda matters and ten (10) 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 was suspended.

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

**Paul Hoh, of Hampden Blvd.,** stated that there was deep concern expressed at the College Heights Community Council (CHCC) meeting last night about the proposed changes to the 1100 block of Rockland Street. He stated that the community was upset that they were

excluded from the process, although they recognized that their exclusion is not the fault of the current administration. He stated that neighbors described the problems with the radius of the turns large trucks that cause the trucks to routinely run over the curbs, the problems that will be created by the cutaway areas of the median strips along with other issues. He noted that reducing the traffic lanes will worsen these problems. He also noted the need to confer with agencies such as BARTA and the Post Office. He suggested that Council table the resolution and hold a public hearing where all parties can provide input.

**Ric Nieves, of Northmont Blvd.,** suggested that Council vote against the Rockland Street project, as it makes no sense. He expressed the belief that the street works fine as it is. He questioned spending valuable tax payer dollars to primarily improve Albright's gateway. He expressed the belief that the design of the project will create traffic bottlenecks and increase safety issues for vehicles and pedestrians alike. He agreed that a public hearing should occur.

**Lex McMillan, President of Albright College,** stated that he sympathizes with the concerns expressed at the meeting last night. He stated that the college worked with a community development consultant through the Wyomissing Foundation and he stated that he was unsure why the community was excluded from providing input. He stated that the group has been working on this project for the past five (5) years. He stated that the project originated as a way Albright could make improvements to the City infrastructure and enhance the viability of the Rockland Plaza. He expressed the belief that the design will alleviate safety issues, not create them. He stated that the project is funded by the college, the Wyomissing Foundation and PennDOT. He stated that Albright will maintain the area, including the landscaping.

**Deb McCreery, representing Albright,** was not present.

**Ed Terrell, of Franklin St.,** stated that he decided to return to Council meetings as they seem to go on and on. He stated that he has done his homework and he distributed the City's organizational chart showing that Reading citizens lead the government. He stated that citizens elect officials to be their voice. He stated that the City has 2800 blighted properties and he expressed the belief that there has misuse of federal funding. He noted that the \$65M hotel does not pay taxes but officials still support it. He expressed the belief that a new Water Authority is not needed as water should become a City department.

**Arthur Scholtz , of Green St.,** distributed photos showing the severe damage to 1132 Green Street. He stated that the deteriorated condition of this property is causing damage to the adjoining properties and that he has been forced to keep his property vacant with the water disconnected. He stated that the City condemned the property three (3) years ago and asked the administration to demolish the property before it collapses on its own. He expressed the belief that a heavy snow over the coming winter season will cause the property to collapse.

**Abraham Amoros, from the Laborers International Union,** described the relationship his organization has with other agencies. He expressed the belief that PLAs work to create smoothly running projects and benefits projects in other ways. He expressed the belief that the City should use a PLA for the WWTP project.

**Jimmy Rivera, from Buttonwood St.,** was not present.

**Ryan Helms, from the local IBEW 743,** stated that the WWTP project was bid out three (3) times; two (2) times with a PLA and once without a PLA. He expressed the belief that the presentation made a few years ago noting the benefits PLAs bring to projects fell on deaf ears. He noted that the bid without the PLA came in only \$5M lower than the last bid with the PLA. However, the bid still came in at \$28M over budget. He stated that the majority of the low bidders are not local companies. He stated that the use of the PLA would help keep local jobs for local contractors and their employees.

**Brian McMahon, from the Steamfitters Local 420 Union,** expressed the belief that PLAs benefit projects. He also noted that of the three (3) bids for the WWTP project, the final bid without the PLA still came in \$28M over budget. He expressed the belief that PLAs keep the dollars locally. He noted that the lowest bidder for the HVAC component is a union shop from outside the area. He suggested rejecting all bids submitted and rebidding the project a 4<sup>th</sup> time to drive the costs lower.

**Ed Braukus, representing Membership Development at IBEW Local 743,** stated that he represents 446 members and he spoke in support of the PLA as it would bring jobs home for local workers. He suggested that the lack of a PLA at the Citadel project for the Reading School District caused the project to be delayed and over budget. He explained that the PLA provides guarantees.

**Karl Baskin, of Fairview Street,** stated that he is president of the Ironworkers 420 Union and he described the volunteer service of his organization and their dedication to the community. He stated that at one time being a tradesman provided a wage that supported a family. However, now he looks to the right and he sees gangs; he looks to the left and he sees drugs; and he looks straight ahead and he sees minimum wage jobs and hairnets. He noted the importance of trades as a career. He stated that there are 25 trades' apprentices and there are no jobs available in their own City.

**Nate Rivera, of North 6<sup>th</sup> Street,** noted that October is Hispanic Heritage Month and he questioned why representative groups were excluded from the proclamation declaring Marc Anthony Day. He expressed the belief that parking tickets have reached an epidemic level and he suggested that tickets are not a solution to the City's financial problems. He

suggested creating a new board to create solutions without tickets. He noted the scarcity of parking spaces in most City neighborhoods.

**Evelyn Morrison, of Rose Street**, expressed the belief that using federal funding without holding a public hearing for the Rockland Street project is a violation of federal requirements. She stated that she has not received a response to her Right To Know request. She expressed concern about the lack of public input on the Rockland Street project and she suggested that the project was improperly influenced by John Weidenhammer and the Wyomissing Foundation.

**Anne Marie Wolfe, of Franklin Street**, described the hardships and challenges of day-today living for some.

## **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 August 8<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Council. Council President Waltman stated that the one (1) ordinance is being added for introduction regarding authorizing the transfer of \$35,000 from the Fund Balance to the Charter Board to cover their expenses through the end of 2016.

**Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Daubert, to approve the minutes from the August 22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda, as amended, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading. The motion was approved unanimously.**

## **Consent Agenda**

**A. Resolution 69-2016** – promoting Officer Joseph Cadawallder to Sergeant

**B. Resolution 70-2016** – promoting Officer Brett Sneeringer to Sergeant

**C. Resolution 71-2016** – authorizing the Mayor to sign and submit a Pennsylvania Department of Education Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Grant application to request \$75,000 in funding \$75,000 for the HVAC rehabilitation of the Reading Public Library Northeast Branch. Total project cost \$166,000.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

The mayor announced that he received a letter informing him that PepsiCo will be closing their Center Avenue and Bern Street location. He stated that he was blindsided by the news and that he will be sure to do outreach to see if anything can be done to turn this situation around. He stated that the trash contract will be bid out in the same way as the current system. There will be no changes that will limit the private haulers ability to enter into private collection contract

with residential properties. He stated that there are approximately 5825 collection accounts remaining with the private haulers and the rest are on the City's program.

The mayor noted his success to date driven by working cooperatively with City Council to garner their approval for decriminalizing the parking ticket system. He noted the successes he has made since taking office were many of the things he promised during his campaign. He noted that those successes were possible by working cooperatively with others. He stated that he is proud that water is no longer being turned off at owner occupied properties when delinquencies occur

Nelton Manon, a citizen sitting near the mayor, began asking the mayor questions. Council President Waltman interrupted and advised the citizen that questions from the audience are not permitted.

The mayor stated that he is the same man as the man who ran for office last year. He noted his positive working relationship with City Council and suggested that others trust that he will work cooperatively with him. He stated that he invites citizens to the table to discuss various issues; however, he will be wary of meetings organized for questionable purposes.

The managing director thanked the Police, Public Works Departments and others involved in the Reading 120 Race as their tireless work lead to a successful event. He called attention to the large stack of records provided by the haulers to correct the information they originally provided. The new information has been entered into the system by the CSC. He announced that a flyer regarding the packaging of rubbish will be going out in the October water bills in both English and Spanish.

Councilor Reed noted that the loss of PepsiCo is a huge loss for District 5 as they have been at that location since the mid 1920s. She suggested a broad marketing campaign to find a buyer for the site and preventing the site from becoming a blighted property.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the success of the Reading 120 for both participants and visitors.

## **AUDITOR'S REPORT**

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

- A report on the Unemployment Compensation expense for the last 10 years
- A report showing that approximately \$408K was spent on the WWTP project between January and June 2016 and overall \$52.7M was spent on the project since it started in 2008

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

## ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

### Pending Legislation

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

**Ordinance** – amending the City’s Zoning Ordinance, Section 600-800, Districts, Section 600-1203 Conditional Use, Section 600-2100 Telecommunications Towers and Antennas, and Section 600-2206 Telecommunication Definitions *Introduced at the August 8 regular meeting*

There were no ordinances eligible for final passage at this meeting.

### INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

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

**A. Ordinance** - restricting parking by establishing a No Parking zone on the east side of Reed Street at the intersection of Buttonwood Street and Reed Street for a distance of approximately 28 feet. The purpose of the restriction is to establish a safe and sufficient turning space for vehicles turning from Buttonwood Street onto that section of Reed Street.

**B. Ordinance** – authorizing the transfer of cash reserves in the General Fund totaling \$85,000.00 from Fund Balance to Public Works

**C. Ordinance** – authorizing the transfer of cash reserves in the Sewer Fund in the amount of \$61,717.50 from Fund Balance (54-07-00-2980-000) to Engineering Costs (54-07-45-4816-000) and to Administrative costs (54-07-45-4823-000) and amends the 2016 Sewer Fund operating budget to allocate funds to Engineering to be performed on 6<sup>th</sup> and Canal Pump Station for Phase I.

**D. Ordinance** – authorizing the transfer of \$35,000 from the Fund Balance to the Charter Board to cover their expenses through the end of 2016

### RESOLUTIONS

**A. Resolution 72-2016** – authorizing the City Solicitor to execute the reimbursement agreement in the RAS with No. R16050006 for the Rockland Street Project initiated by the Wyomissing Foundation

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Daubert, to table Resolution No. 72-2016 until October 24<sup>th</sup>.

Resolution No. 72-2016 was tabled by the following vote:

Yeas: Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Slifko, Twyman, Waltman

**President - 7**

**Nays: None - 0**

## **COUNCIL COMMENT**

Councilor Daubert wished all students a great academic year. He also noted concern with the comments related to the WWTP project still being over budget and that the work is not coming from local contractors. He stated that he will keep watch over this issue.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed support for local trades' jobs and the apprentice programs. She expressed the belief that as the WWTP project is a large project it could provide great experience for those in the apprentice programs. She noted the growth of the number of young people involved in biking and the opportunity organizations like the bike hub offer. She noted the need for bikers and drivers to drive in the public right of way safely and with caution.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz spoke of her fabulous visit to our Sister City in Germany and the great experience the trip was. She stated that Mayor Bausch will be visiting here within the next two (2) years.

Councilor Marmarou displayed a flyer showing the folding stop signs that are used when traffic signals are not in service. He noted that some individuals are unfolding them creating a conflict between the stop sign and the working traffic signal. He suggested locking them when they are not in use.

Councilor Reed thanked all municipalities involved in the Reading 120 Race. She thanked the Reading Fightins for a great season provided by the team and its management. She noted that the games provide a venue for great family outings in a world class ballpark. She also thanked the Public Works Director for checking on the street light outage on the Schuylkill Avenue Bridge.

Councilor Reed described the recent shooting of a neighbor who was cleaning up a yard in his area of trash and dog feces. She asked the administration if there were past or current property maintenance violations at this property.

Councilor Slifko expressed the belief that the City needs discussion around the demolition of dilapidated properties. He also thanked the Zoning Administrator for his work to organize the bike race.

Councilor Twyman expressed the belief that the bike race is a great way to highlight the beautiful terrain and scenery Reading and Berks County has to offer. He thanked those who took the opportunity to provide comment during the public comment period during the meeting. He noted the importance of public comment and new ideas.

Council President Waltman stated that a public hearing for the Rockland Street project will be scheduled and he expressed concern that the project got this far without input from the affected neighborhood. He expressed concern that the Albright President blamed the consultant for not involving the community. He noted that the 2017 budget process will be starting soon.

Council President Waltman expressed sympathy on the passing for former MDJ Deborah Lachina, who gave a multitude of service to the Reading Community over her lifetime.

Council President Waltman reviewed the upcoming Council meeting schedule.

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

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