

**City of Reading City Council**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**April 25, 2022**

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz called the meeting to order. Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz asked everyone to send prayers for Council President Waltman's speedy recovery.

The invocation was given by Nilda Nieves, Feet on the Street Youth Ministry.

All present pledged to the flag.

There were executive sessions after the April 18<sup>th</sup> COW regarding the settlement of litigation and prior to the April 25<sup>th</sup> COW regarding contracts, litigation and personnel.

**ATTENDANCE**

Councilor Daubert, District 1  
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2  
Councilor Ventura, District 3 – attending virtually  
Councilor Butler, District 4  
Councilor Reed, District 5  
Councilor Cepeda-Freytiz, District 6  
Council Solicitor M. Gombar  
City Auditor M. Rodriguez  
City Clerk L. Kelleher  
City Solicitor F. Lachat - virtually  
Acting managing director F. Denbowski

**PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

City Council issued a commendation recognizing Fair Housing Month, accepted by Kathryn Cobb-Holmes, Human Relation Commission Chair

The City Clerk administered the oath to the Police Chaplains.

The administration and Council issued a commendation to Fire Chief W. Stoudt recognizing his long-term service and dedication to the City.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz stated that there are four (4) citizens registered to provide public comment; one (1) on agenda matters and three (3) on non-agenda matters. Councilor Reed read the public comment rules adopted by ordinance.

**Jon Auchter, of Pike Street,** submitted petitions containing 76 signatures of people who reside in the N 13<sup>th</sup> and Pike area requesting a 4-way stop sign at this intersection which continues to be riddled with car crashes. He stated that the group would prefer a traffic signal, recognizing that the cost is much greater. He stated that children between the ages of 5 and 12 travel in this high risk area during school days. He also stated that the area is also traveled by older children in high school and young adults at Albright. He described some of the most recent accidents including that which occurred this afternoon resulting in one of the vehicles coming to a stop on the sidewalk on the southwestern sidewalk. He stated that there have been three (3) crashes at this intersection in April and he estimated that there are 30-50 annually. He noted that the majority of the accidents result with vehicles coming onto the sidewalk and causing property damage to the residential properties located at this intersection.

**Elizabeth Munoz, of Mulberry St.,** was not present.

**Ann Marie Wolfe, of Franklin St.,** stressed the need for youth to make friends to create a sense of positive in this overly negative world. She asked for advice on how to move this issue forward.

**Evelyn Morrison, of Church St.,** congratulated Chief W. Stoudt on his pending retirement. She stated that she attended the last Nominations Committee meeting and that she will express her concerns in written form. She suggested working to recruit crossing guard applicants from the impacted neighborhoods. She stated that the We The People group is willing to assist in the recruitment of applicants. She noted the lack of a handicapped ramp at the parking lot serving the NW Middle School and the need to correct this issue. She also noted her support for the installation of a traffic signal at the 13<sup>th</sup> and Pike intersection.

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

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading and the minutes from the April 11<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Council, along with the summations of discussion from the April 11<sup>th</sup> and April 18<sup>th</sup> COW meeting. She noted the need to amend Consent Agenda Resolution G regarding the Private Bid sale of two (2) properties in the Tax Claim process by eliminating 1253 Spruce Street from the resolution and opposing only the property on South 17<sup>th</sup> ½ Street and relocating the Resolution for separate consideration to the Resolution heading. There were no objections.

**The agenda for this meeting, including the Consent Agenda legislation, as amended, the minutes from the April 11<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of Council, and the summations of discussion listed were approved by acclamation.**

## **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 acclamation 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. Award of Contract** – to Degler-Whiting in the amount of \$110,005, from the CIP, for playground equipment and repairs to the SE Quadrant - to include City Park, Neversink Playground, and Orange and Cherry Playground. Pandora Park and Reading Iron were not address in this quadrant due to recent or future projects. 10<sup>th</sup> and South playground will not be addressed at this time as discussions of future use are pending.

**B. Motion** – recognizing the shift in CIP projects to fund active/ongoing projects as follows:

- Within the CIP budgetary line 34-07-71-4801: Playgrounds and Parks \$875,000 will be reduced by \$100,000 and added to the 3rd and Spruce All abilities Playground to satisfy the DCNR grant matching requirements.
- Within the CIP budgetary line 34-07-74-4801: McKnight and Spring Improvements of \$382,000 will be reduced by \$100,000 to fund the 3rd and Court Fire Station upgrade to allow project completion, as it was not finished in 2021 as planned.
- Aboveground Restroom and 5th and Penn of \$130,000 will be removed from the CIP budget and the PW ADA Access Project will be funded at \$56,000 leaving \$74,000 unencumbered for new or underfunded project completion.

**C. Award of Contract** – for the purchase of accessories to increase the range and capability of the existing Telerob robotic platform utilized by the RPD Bomb Squad to AeroVironment Inc, Simi Valley, CA at the amount of \$39,106.60 via the Capital Budget. The robotic platform is used when responding to reports of suspicious items/packages, IED (improvised explosive devices) and recovery of ordinance. These accessories will allow the team members to position at a safer distance thus increasing the safety factors for the members.

**D. Award of Contract** – for the purchase of a Digital X-RAY system to integrate with the RPD Bomb Squad's existing Telerob robotic platform to NOVO Digital Radiography INC (NOVO DR Inc), Grand Blanc, MI at \$62,676.10 via the Capital Budget. This system will be used to assist members of the RPD Bomb Squad with investigations of suspicious packages by allowing the members to position at a safe distance thus increasing the safety factors for the members. This system will integrate with the existing robotic equipment being used by the RPD Bomb Squad members. The equipment is Sole Source and the justifications have been completed and accepted by the City Administration.

**E. Resolution 74-2022** - authorizing the execution of the Federal-Aid Reimbursement Settlement Agreement No. 057563 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> & Penn Streets Crosswalk Project, PennDOT MPMS No. 76614

**F. Resolution 75-2022** – authorizing the exoneration of the 2021 property taxes, penalties and interest in the amount of \$955.94 at 138, 139, 140, 141 and 143 Whitaker Court for Goggleworks

**Relocated to the Resolution Heading**

**G. Resolution 76-2022** – directing the Solicitor to oppose the Private Sale Bid of 326 S 17<sup>th</sup> ½ St and 1253 Spruce St with the Berks County Tax Claim Bureau

**H. Award of Contract** – to Barry Isett & Associates, Wyomissing, PA in the submitted price of \$99,900.00 from the Public Works budget for design and engineering services for the Centre Park Revitalization Project. In 2018, a master plan was commissioned for Centre Park. The City of Reading would like to move forward with the improvements as outlined in the master plan. Improvements are to include but are not limited to interpretive signage, lighting, central sculpture, ADA walkways, improved entranceways, etc.

### **Administrative Report**

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

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Frank Denbowski, Interim Managing Director  
**PREPARED BY:** Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant  
**MEETING DATE:** April 25, 2022  
**AGENDA MEMO DATE:** April 20, 2022

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#### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**

- The Community Development Department continues to work diligently with developers on projects, as presented to City Council at the April 18<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

#### **FINANCE:**

- The Finance Department’s Information Technology Division completed 547 help desk tickets during the previous month.
- The IT Division has begun deploying a new wireless system to remote City sites.
- The IT Division continues the configuration of PC units in conjunction with ongoing Motorola training.
- The Finance Department’s Citizens Service Center completed the Public Utility Realty Tax Act (PURTA) report. This report contains information on the assessed values of the taxable public utility accounts on the previous year’s real estate tax duplicate and the City’s tax revenue and tax rate information.

- The CSC Division’s Manager, Maria Kantner, attended a Berks EIT Tax Collection Committee meeting on March 31<sup>st</sup>. As a result, she would like to share that revenues are trending to increase for the entire county. Also, receipts are expected to be collected and distributed much faster due to a new software system employed by Berks EIT Bureau.
- The CSC Division provided the following data related to phone calls received:

Request Type	REQUESTS	PERCENT
Sewer backup	106	20.27%
Yardwaste	66	12.62%
Property Maintenance Unpaid Fees Request	43	8.22%
Pothole or sunken utility cut	35	6.69%
Needs Recycling Bin	23	4.4%
Trash Pick up	20	3.82%
Property Inspections Scheduling	20	3.82%
Recycling Electronics	17	3.25%
Trash Enforcement	16	3.06%
Zoning Violation	12	2.29%
Unpermitted construction activity	11	2.1%
Property Maintenance Issues	11	2.1%
Building and Trades Permits	11	2.1%
Zoning Inquiry	8	1.53%
Dog dirt	8	1.53%
Street Sweeping	6	1.15%
Illegal Dumping	6	1.15%
Meet with the Mayor	5	0.96%
Housing Permits	5	0.96%
Feeding Animals	5	0.96%
Tire Removal/Pick Up	4	0.76%
Structure	4	0.76%
Street Repair or Paving	4	0.76%
Street light out or malfunctioning	4	0.76%
Property Inspections	4	0.76%
Tree Trimming Public	3	0.57%
Trash Education	3	0.57%

Traffic signal out or malfunctioning	3	0.57%
Street sign damaged or vandalized	3	0.57%
Sewer Grates Catch Basins	3	0.57%
Property Maintenance Fees	3	0.57%
Parks general	3	0.57%
Hauler Issue	3	0.57%
Handicap parking	3	0.57%
Graffiti vandalism removal	3	0.57%
Tree Questions Permits	2	0.38%
Trash Cans Outside Too Long	2	0.38%
Street Sign Request	2	0.38%
Street Condition - Hazardous	2	0.38%
Recycling Pickup	2	0.38%
No Water	2	0.38%
Mold/Mildew	2	0.38%
Infestation	2	0.38%
Dead animal	2	0.38%
Clean City Projects	2	0.38%
Sewers - Sign Posting	1	0.19%
Sewer Billing Inquiry	1	0.19%
Recycling Education	1	0.19%
Plumbing Issue	1	0.19%
Playground Maintenance	1	0.19%
Over grown grass and weeds	1	0.19%
Odor	1	0.19%
Non Emergency Police	1	0.19%
No Electric	1	0.19%
Line Painting	1	0.19%
Housing Inspection	1	0.19%
Historic preservation assistance	1	0.19%
Health Hazard	1	0.19%
Dumpsters	1	0.19%

Curb/Sidewalk Repair Enforcement	1	0.19%
Collections - Codes	1	0.19%
Building & Trades Inspection Building	1	0.19%
Animal Control - Live Animals	1	0.19%
Abandoned Vehicles on Property	1	0.19%

- The Finance Department would like to welcome Aaron Yuan, who will be starting on May 9<sup>th</sup> as a Summer Intern in the Accounting Office.
- The Finance Department has created a Munis Training Manual for employees to reference. Training sessions for various areas of the new software continue to be held. Currently, Munis Capital Asset and Budget Process Review/Project Ledger and Budget Process Review training are scheduled.
- The Finance Department's CSC Division and IT Division are working together on the Hansen data conversion into the Tyler Munis system.
- The Finance Department's Grant Coordinator is compiling a list of all existing and relevant grants and studying how other organizations best utilize MUNIS for grant management.
- The Finance Department Purchasing Division provided the following update on current and upcoming projects:
  - **City Hall Roof Replacement Project Phase 1.** The contract was awarded to Mid-State Roofing. The project consists of demolishing portions of the existing building as needed to accommodate the alterations and installation of a new roofing system.
  - **City Park Playground Improvements Project.** The contract was awarded to Empire Services. The project consists of removing trees lying on the ground and unhealthy standing trees, pruning large trees, understory clearing and grubbing, earthwork/porous asphalt paving walkways, segmental block piers, landscaping, and the installation of owner-furnished modular play and swing structures, benches and safety surface mulch.
  - **Reading Police Department Training and Special Operations Facility Engineering Project RFP.** Submissions from qualified individuals or firms were due by April 14<sup>th</sup>. The RFP is for design engineering service for the new Reading Police Department Training and Special Operations Facility.
  - **Pest Control Services for Public Works, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Fire Department** – submissions are due on May 13, 2022, and should encompass all City-owned properties.

**FIRE:**

- The Fire Department's 2022 Paramedic class completed the Fire Academy on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, and they have been assigned to ambulances to begin their street orientation. Their graduation is scheduled for Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, in the evening.
- The Fire Department's Southwest Station will begin the ramp reconstruction on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The work is anticipated to last approximately four weeks. While the project is underway, the engine will be relocated during overnight hours due to the inability to use the station ramp.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> and Marion Fire Station project site work is progressing. Prepping has begun on the Marion Street side to start pouring the slab. Below is a current photo of progress at the worksite:





### **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:**

- Starting on January 1<sup>st</sup>, and as of March 18<sup>th</sup>, HRC has:
  - 160 total rent and utility assistance applications were received (An increase of 52 applications since last reported).
    - 143 applications for rental assistance
      - 130 applicants were facing eviction
        - 2 were withdrawn by the tenants
        - 2 were denied due to not meeting the qualifications of the program
      - 10 applicants were not actively facing eviction
      - 3 applicants resided outside of the City but within the County.
    - 17 applications for utility assistance
      - 1 was denied for being over income according to HUD guidelines
      - 1 was denied due to the tenant not meeting program qualifications
- The Human Relations Commission Executive Director Kimberly Talbot provided the following explanation on the difference between received applications and approved applications:
  - **ESG-CV (COVID-related)**: 51 cases were submitted. 42 of those cases were approved and paid. A total of \$158,492.83 has been expended to date.
  - **ESG**: 20 cases were submitted. 14 of those cases were paid. A total of \$52,845.36 has been expended to date.
  - **CDBG-CV**: CDBG-CV and ESG\_CV are used together, which occurred in 9 of the 51 cases mentioned above. CDBG-CV was used for one approved case, and \$4,350.00 was expended.
- The guidelines utilized for each program are set forth by the Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and the City's policies & procedures. Each program has its own rules/restrictions. The following is a summary of the requirements for each program, but this is not an exhaustive list:
  - **ESG (regular)**:
    - Applicant must be a city of Reading resident.
    - Applicant must be within the prescribed income guidelines (very low-income).
    - Applicant must show sustainability.

- **ESG-CV:**
  - Applicant must be a city of Reading resident.
  - Applicant must demonstrate a financial impact related to the pandemic/COVID-19.
  - Applicant must meet HUD's definition of homeless (in certain circumstances).
  - Applicant must be able to provide documentation to verify their identity, social, etc.
  - Applicant must meet income guidelines.
- **CDBG-CV:**
  - Guidelines are similar to the above program information.
- The HRC would like to note that this program information list is not all-inclusive.

**HUMAN RESOURCES:**

- The Human Resource Department would like to welcome the following new employees to the City of Reading organization:
  - Justina Rodriguez began on April 13<sup>th</sup> as a part-time Human Relations Commission Clerk
  - Caitlin Kammarrer began on April 18<sup>th</sup> as a Project Director.
- The Human Resource Department would like to congratulate the following employees, on behalf of the City of Reading organization, on their upcoming retirement:
  - Bruce McAfee from the Property Maintenance Division on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022
  - Fire Chief William Stoudt Jr. on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022

- **LIBRARY:**The Reading Public Library provided the following statistics for March 2022:

SERVICES - REFERENCE QUESTIONS	MAIN	NW	NE	SE	Sr OTR	MTD	YTD
Number of Questions (Actual Reference Sample Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	

#### SERVICES

Patron Count	5992	1072	1981	1538	170	10753	2874
Adult Library Card Registration	32	2	13	8	8	63	17
Juvenile Library Card Registration	14	0	4	6	0	24	8

#### SERVICES - CIRCULATION

Adult AV	2357	77	328	479	244	3485	960
Adult Print	2306	143	572	581	483	4085	1125
Overdrive Circulation	944	94	104	120	0	1262	383
Hoopla Circulation	1228	43	136	242	0	1649	496
Juvenile AV	319	38	45	66	1	469	122
Juvenile Print	1685	59	473	985	1	3203	855
Circulation of Children's Materials (ARQ51)	2004	97	518	1051	2	3672	978
Circulation of Physical Items (ARQ52)	6667	317	1418	2111	729	11242	3064
<b>Total Item Circulation</b>	<b>8839</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>1658</b>	<b>2473</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>14153</b>	<b>3943</b>

#### OTHER ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

Time (hr:min) Usage of Patron PCs	1330:58	55:19	178:42	298:47	0	1863:46	5050:0
Conversion to minutes	79858	3319	10722	17927	0	111826	30300
<b>PC Sessions =Time/30</b>	<b>2662</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3728</b>	<b>1010</b>
Wireless Count	534	100	130	205	0	969	266
AWE Early Literacy Station Sessions	78	0	10	55	0	143	36
<b>Total Computer Usage</b>	<b>3274</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4840</b>	<b>1313</b>

#### MATERIALS

A/V Materials Added	89	16	37	35	20	197	49
Print Materials Added	671	35	115	104	25	950	285
Government Documents Added	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Non Print Materials Added (Kits)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous Materials Added (Museum Passes)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total Number of Items Added</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1147</b>	<b>336</b>
A/V Materials Discarded	27	0	0	46	0	73	9
Print Materials Discarded	389	2	2065	2151	0	4607	510
Government Documents Discarded	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Non Print Materials Discarded (Kits)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Miscellaneous Materials Discarded (Museum Passes)	0	1	1	1	0	3	
<b>Total Number of Items Discarded</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2066</b>	<b>2198</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4683</b>	<b>520</b>

## PROGRAMS

Number of Live Programs for Preschool (ages birth-5)	5	6	13	10	0	34	74
Number Live of Programs for Children (ages 6-11)	8	6	28	8	0	50	124
Number of Live Programs for YA (age 12-18)	5	22	1	1	0	29	69
Number of Live Programs for Adults (ages 19+)	11	6	14	12	2	45	111
Number of Live General Interest Programs (all ages)	6	0	0	12	0	18	53
<b>Total Number of Programs</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>431</b>
Attendance at Live Programs for Preschool (ages birth-5)	30	64	109	151	0	354	827
Attendance at Live of Programs for Children (ages 6-11)	53	98	252	67	0	470	1307
Attendance at Live Programs for YA (age 12-18)	57	125	2	1	0	185	535
Attendance at Live Programs for Adults (ages 19+)	81	16	195	37	14	343	729
Attendance at Live General Interest Programs (all ages)	87	0	0	74	0	161	353
<b>Total Program Attendance</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1513</b>	<b>3751</b>

## PROGRAMS BY LOCATION *(subset of Total Programs)*

Number of Live In-Person ONSITE programs	30	35	51	33	0	149	357
Number of Live In-Person OFFSITE programs	5	1	1	4	2	13	32
Number of Live Streaming Virtual Programs	0	4	4	6	0	14	51

## ATTENDANCE BY LOCATION

Attendance at Live In-Person ONSITE programs	296	253	412	201	0	1162	2734
Attendance at Live In-Person OFFSITE programs	12	37	101	81	14	245	622
Attendance of Live Streaming Virtual Programs	0	13	15	48	0	76	391

## RECORDED PROGRAMS

Total Number of Recorded Program Presentations	11	0	0	0	0	11	30
Total Views of Recorded Program Presentations within 7 Days	344	0	0	0	0	344	847

## STEM PROGRAMS *(included in above program data)*

Number of STEM programs for preschool	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
Number of STEM programs for Children	7	3	9	9	0	28	61
Number of STEM Programs for Young Adults	0	4	0	0	0	4	11
Number of STEM Programs for Adults	7	0	0	0	0	7	7

## STEM ATTENDANCE

Preschool Children STEM Program Attendance	0	17	0	0	0	17	41
Children's STEM Program Attendance	93	71	35	56	0	255	390
Young Adult STEM Program Attendance	0	11	0	0	0	11	24
Adult STEM Program Attendance	29	0	0	0	0	29	29

## SELF DIRECTED / PASSIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES *(do not include as program)*

How many self-directed/passive activities were offered by	5	3	2	4	0	14	39
How many patrons took part in these activities?	364	42	44	43	0	493	1318

## POLICE:

- The Reading Police Department is collaborating with various community organizations on youth-focused activities such as:
  - Reading Recreation Commission will start a midnight basketball program at 3rd and Spruce Recreation Center in May. Police are aware and have organized deployment for the event.
  - Blacktop Basketball organizers are preparing for the upcoming season and have met with RPD. Police are aware and have organized deployment for the season.

- The Reading Police Youth Academy continues to meet at the Olivet Boys and Girls Club. Cadets will complete CPR certification this week.
- Lt Lillis continues to participate in meetings and activities that focus on reducing youth violence. He will attend various community events throughout the next month throughout the city and at schools.
- The Reading Police Department has conducted successful enforcement operations in collaboration with the DEA, Attorney General's Office, and the USMS, which resulted in the seizure of multiple firearms and the apprehension of several violent offenders.

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

- Public Works staff has completed:
  - 24 clean-up projects resulted in 94 bags and 46 bulk items
  - 113 tires picked up
  - 64 televisions picked up
  - 6 dead animals were picked up
  - 68 storm drains were inspected
    - 32 were cleaned with 6 bags of litter collected
  - 551 bags of litter and trash were collected from Penn Street daily cleaning
    - In addition, clean-up and extra trash cans were added for First Friday events.
- Public Works key staff participated in a site visit at the former Dana 50-acre site to help address security and maintenance issues.
- Public Works are preparing for:
  - PA DEP Secretary McDonnell visit on April 21<sup>st</sup> at City Park's Rose Garden
  - The Great American Cleanup is scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup> throughout the city.
- Public Works Wastewater Treatment Plant Maintenance team cleaned debris from the wet well of the North Reading pump station to ensure that pumps are not impacted during critical operations.
- Public Works WWTP Energy Audit has been completed as part of the US EPA/PA DEP program targeting energy use at wastewater facilities.
- Public Works WWTP has completed the additional sampling and analysis required for NPDES permit renewal is complete. Results were received from the contract laboratory, and a formal response letter is being drafted to accompany the data transmittal.
- Public Works WWTP Laboratory Manager received passing results for all proficiency tests for all PA DEP accredited parameters and were submitted to PA DEP to ensure continued accreditation as an environmental laboratory.

**AUDITOR'S REPORT**

City Auditor Rodriguez read the report attached to the agenda:

**CITY AUDITOR'S REPORT  
Monday April 25, 2022**

**Real Estate Transfer Tax - Update from 1/1/2018 to 3/31/2022**

The City receives a tax levy of 3.5% on the value of the Real Estate Transfer Tax for properties sold. During March of 2022, \$954,153.08 in revenue was recorded; this amount included a total of 291 Real Estate Transfer transactions of which 250 were taxable and 41 were non-taxable. For the current year, \$5.5 million was budgeted for this line item, and about \$2.1 has already been recorded during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

**The chart below illustrates actual Real Estate Transfer Tax data from 2018 to 03/31/2022:**

	<b>3/31/2022</b>	<b>12/31/2021</b>	<b>12/31/2020</b>	<b>12/31/2019</b>	<b>12/31/2018</b>
January	702,030.86	535,849.04	323,123.52	223,920.68	293,105.03
February	512,582.49	523,300.89	511,220.85	615,116.21	204,053.26
March	954,153.08	1,178,885.61	601,103.82	266,411.11	348,937.95
April		717,308.73	235,765.07	548,506.44	347,097.22
May		447,710.27	157,245.87	441,084.11	322,871.76
June		719,042.39	1,464,932.00	363,997.72	350,369.72
July		752,234.50	437,026.44	359,547.89	350,708.33
August		1,078,840.76	361,892.51	353,006.61	514,841.63
September		678,323.20	501,228.42	350,731.42	324,492.29
October		480,665.62	493,787.54	340,908.53	389,823.15
November		844,193.89	510,649.58	330,855.79	267,444.32
December		837,430.85	993,086.79	457,238.03	576,429.44
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,168,766.43</b>	<b>8,793,785.75</b>	<b>6,591,062.41</b>	<b>4,651,324.54</b>	<b>4,290,174.10</b>
<b>Total Budgeted</b>	<b>5,500,000.00</b>	<b>4,700,000.00</b>	<b>4,200,000.00</b>	<b>3,800,000.00</b>	<b>3,350,000.00</b>
<b>Over/(Under) Budget</b>		<b>4,093,785.75</b>	<b>2,391,062.41</b>	<b>851,324.54</b>	<b>940,174.10</b>

**The chart below illustrates 2022 Real Estate Transfer Transactions through 3/31/22:**

	<b>Taxable</b>	<b>Non-Taxable</b>	<b>Total Transactions</b>
<b>January</b>	216	33	249
<b>February</b>	135	37	172
<b>March</b>	250	41	291

## User Fees Revenue – Update as of 2/28/2021

For the fiscal year of 2022, the City budgeted \$3,000,000 for User Fees, which is the revenue collected for the EMS services that the City provides. During the first two months of the current year, the City recorded \$496,082.90. And if the revenue received in the upcoming months continues with this same trend, the User Fees Revenue line item should meet its budget target by 12/31/2022.

The chart below illustrates User Fees Revenue from 2018 to 2/28/2022:

	2/28/2022	12/31/2021	12/31/2020	12/31/2019	12/31/2018
<b>User Fees-EMS</b>	496,082.90	3,287,855.40	2,405,142.53	3,333,157.10	2,808,204.15
<b>Total Budgeted</b>	3,000,000.00	3,033,500.00	3,196,000.00	3,095,000.00	2,900,000.00
<b>Over/(Under) Budget</b>		<b>254,355.40</b>	<b>(790,857.47)</b>	<b>238,157.10</b>	<b>(91,795.85)</b>

## Admission Fee Tax – Update as of 03/31/2022

The majority of the revenue collected for Admission Fee Tax comes from events/concerts that take place at the Santander Arena, the Performing Arts Center, the Reading Royals, and the Reading Phils. In 2022, \$200,000 was budgeted for this line item. As of March 31, 2022, a total of \$202,938.67 has been collected, and the revenue for Admission Fee Tax has already exceeded its budget target by \$2,938.67. (See the chart below for details.)

The chart below illustrates 2022 Admission Fee Tax Revenue collected through 3/31/22:

	Reading Phils	Reading Royals	Santander Arena-Other	Performing Arts Center	Total Collected
January	2,686.19	8,618.11	5,013.05	4,687.02	21,004.37
February	2,797.68	9,277.90	44,010.19	25,533.63	81,619.40
March	4,312.12	18,087.30	54,424.75	23,490.73	100,314.90
<b>Total Revenue - 3/31/22</b>	<b>9,795.99</b>	<b>35,983.31</b>	<b>103,447.99</b>	<b>53,711.38</b>	<b>202,938.67</b>
<b>Total Budgeted - 2022</b>					<b>200,000.00</b>

In response to a question from Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, the Auditor stated that at the Audit Committee meeting last week, the external auditor reported on the start of the 2021 External Audit.

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

Daphne Klahr, Executive Director of the Recreation Commission, provided an update on the programming provided. She stated that the after school programs end on May 27<sup>th</sup>. She

noted the success of the open gyms and the Success for Teens programs. A new program in coordination with Police and Fire will begin on Friday evenings from 9:30 pm to 1:30 am. Rides home will be provided for attendees who are not within walking distance and special patrols will be provided for those attending who live in the neighborhood. She stated that the Schlegel Park pool is scheduled to reopen on May 28<sup>th</sup> and the playground programming begins on June 13<sup>th</sup>. The Commission is currently working on a mural project with an RHS grad. Whacky Water Wednesdays will return again this summer. She noted the success of the soccer program at 11<sup>th</sup> and Pike which is now a 12 month indoor/outdoor program and the deck hockey program for youth and young adults. She thanked the core employees of the Rec Commission for their passion and work to make all these programs possible.

Councilor Daubert thanked Ms. Klahr for her succinct report.

Councilor Butler thanked Ms. Klahr for the Commission's work for all City residents.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that it has been an honor to serve on the Commission since it started. She asked Ms. Klahr to highlight the new program slated for Neversink Playground. Ms. Klahr stated that the State recently held focus group sessions to learn what type of activities today's youth are seeking. Locally the most popular activities missing were identified as archery and camping. An archery program will be held at Neversink. If it is successful the program will be expanded.

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz inquired about how the Commission markets its programs. Mr. Klahr stated that programs are marketed through the Reading School District as the District has access to students and parents. The Commission also uses QR codes, social media and word of mouth.

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz questioned if the Commission focuses on youth aged 13 and older. Ms. Klahr stated that the majority of the programs are focused on teens. She noted that other organizations like Olivet and PAL offer additional programming.

## **ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE**

**A. Bill No. 32-2022** – amending City Code Chapter 576, Part 12, Parades, Special Events, and Public Gatherings by making revisions to the special event application process and the corresponding section of the Chapter 212 fee schedule for special events ***Introduced at the April 11 regular meeting***

**Councilor Daubert moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 32-2022.**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stressed the need for those planning events to begin early



enough to follow the event process.

**Bill No. 32-2022 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

**B. Bill No. 33-2022** – amending the 2022 General Agency fund (31) to reflect the appropriation of funding in the amount of \$152,500 for the Lead Hazard control Program. The Community Development department property maintenance division will be managing the healthy homes initiative program targeting households with children six (6) years old or younger and have been diagnosed with Elevated Blood Lead Level (EBLL). The presence of lead in a child could cause developmental challenges medically found to have a measurable concentration of lead in their blood. ***Introduced at the April 11 regular meeting***

**Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Butler, to enact Bill No. 33-2022.**

**Bill No. 33-2022 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

**C. Bill No. 34-2022** – amending City Code Chapter 453, Part 3, Mobile Vendors making corrections and adding provisions for vendors at the Pagoda ***Introduced at the April 11 regular meeting***

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 34-2022.**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this will provide a process that permits mobile vendors to properly locate at the Pagoda.

**Bill No. 34-2022 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

**D. Bill No. 35-2022** – amending City Code Chapter 23, Part 14, Code & License Appeals Board by adding Mobile Vendors Appeals to the powers of this board ***Introduced at the April 11 regular meeting***

**Councilor Reed moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to enact Bill No. 35-2022.**

**Bill No. 35-2022 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

**E. Bill No. 36-2022** – amending the Position Ordinance by eliminating 2 of the 4 fulltime Ambassadors, leaving 2 at \$20.87 per hour for a total of \$41,600 per employee per year and adding 6 part-time positions at a rate of \$15 per hour at 28 hours per work for a total of \$21,840  
***Introduced at the April 11 regular meeting***

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 36-2022.**

The acting managing director explained that the ambassadors will be assigned to the area bounded by 2<sup>nd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Streets and Franklin to Walnut Streets. There will be a fulltime supervisor assigned to dayshift and nightshift with the part-timers split between the shifts. There will also be weekend work based on the need due to events.

Councilor Daubert inquired about how the 28 hour maximum will be handled. The acting managing director stated that the maximum number of hours for part-time work is defined by the AFSCME 2763 contract. He stated that the hours could fluctuate based on the needs but the working hours will be as regulated as possible. The part-timers will be assisting with special event set-up, clean-ups (in addition to those conducted by Hope Rescue Mission) and provide a physical presence in the downtown area.

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz questioned if anyone spoke with the downtown business owners to learn about their needs. She expressed the belief that business owners need the downtown properly marketed to attract potential customers.

The acting managing director opined that providing a physical presence and performing clean and safe activities is the first steps toward improving the downtown. He stated that it is impossible for the lone Downtown Coordinator to contact each business individually and that the ambassadors will assist with touching base with the business owners.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for the ambassadors to be engaged in the essence of the downtown with the ability to provide positive guidance to visitors.

Councilor Reed agreed and suggested that the various downtown guides and tour materials be revamped and utilized.

**Bill No. 36-2022 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

**F. Bill No. 37-2022** – increasing the salary of the Fire Chief to \$105,000.00 per annum, payable in equal bi-monthly installments *Introduced at the April 11 regular meeting*

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Daubert, to enact Bill No. 37-2022.**

**Bill No. 37-2022 was enacted by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

## **INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES**

Councilor Butler read the following ordinances into the record:

**A. Ordinance** – authorizing the placement of a 4-way stop sign at the N. 13<sup>th</sup> and Pike Intersection

Councilor Butler stated that Ordinance A is amended to add a traffic signal.

**B. Ordinance** – amending Chapter 576-416 Parking Fines and eliminating the fine associated with Trucks, Trailers and Tractors parking longer than 1 hour and increasing the fine for Parking within 15 feet of a Fire Hydrant from \$100 to \$200 and increasing the 30 and 60 day penalties from \$50 to \$100

**C. Ordinance** – adopting and amending the 2018 International Fire Code

**D. Ordinance** – amending Chapter 576, Section 800 Impounding and Immobilization of Vehicles to provide updates that coincide with other sections and ordinances

**E. Ordinance** – amending the City's Zoning Map by changing the parcel located at 1716 N 12<sup>th</sup> Street from MC to R3

**F. Ordinance** – amending Code Section 576-409 Parking Prohibited on Private Property and Section § 576-803. Authority to Remove and Impound Unattended Vehicles on Private Property by

any Privately Operated Towing Businesses operating within the City of Reading, as per 75 Pa.C.S. §3353.3.b Towing Vehicles on Private Property and 67 Pa. Code, 212.115. Posting of Private Parking Lots to prevent predatory towing practices.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

**A. Resolution 77-2022** – appointing Dep Chief James Stoudt as Fire Chief

**Councilor Daubert moved, seconded by Councilor Reed to adopt Resolution No. 77-2022.**

Councilor Daubert stated that Deputy Chief J. Stoudt was incredibly impressive in the interview and he noted the Deputy Chief's dedication and commitment to the Department.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed noting the outstanding career service provided by another "Stoudt".

The acting managing director stated that three (3) strong internal applicants were considered and that Deputy Chief J. Stoudt was selected due to his long career service and his strong leadership within the Department.

Councilor Reed echoed the remarks and noted Deputy Chief J. Stoudt's exemplary service to the City and his life-long commitment to the Department and the community.

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz agreed with the sentiments expressed and added that Deputy Chief J. Stoudt's commitment and dedication are inspiring.

**Resolution No. 77-2022 was adopted by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

Deputy Chief J. Stoudt thanked Council for their support, noting that serving in this role has been his lifelong dream.

**Relocated from the Consent Agenda Heading**

**G. Resolution 76-2022** – directing the Solicitor to oppose the Private Sale Bid of 326 S 17<sup>th</sup> ½ St and 1253 Spruce St

**Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Daubert, to adopt Resolution No. 76-2022.**

**Councilor Daubert moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to amend Resolution No. 76-2022 by eliminating 1253 Spruce Street from the resolution.**

**The motion to amend Resolution 76-2022 was approved by the following vote.**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

Council Solicitor Gombar noted that the State Tax Law does not require Council to take any action if they wish to support the Private Sale bid.

**Resolution No. 76-2022 was adopted, as amended, by the following vote:**

**Yeas: Butler, Cepeda-Freytiz, Daubert, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Ventura - 6**

**Nays: None - 0**

## **COUNCIL COMMENT**

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the uptick in the speeding problem. She also asked those who visit Mt. Penn to respect the mountain and behave responsibly.

Councilor Reed noted that there are some who feel attacked by the introduction of Ordinance G limiting elected officials use of city vehicles, gas cards and credit cards. She noted that this is simply responsible legislative policy that is not personal to any individuals. She also noted the introduction of the ordinance to increase the fine for parking at a fire hydrant which is reckless behavior that creates potential monumental public safety issues.

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz thanked those providing public comment and reports tonight. She also thanked those watching. She noted the success of the Earth Day and Great American Cleanup events. She described some new initiatives and activities, including the next First Friday scheduled for May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Daubert asked everyone to continue to send prayers to Council President Waltman.

Councilor Butler asked everyone to be aware of the recent scam phone calls regarding unpaid utility bills.

Council Vice President Cepeda-Freytiz announced the upcoming meeting schedule.

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

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