CITY OF READING, OHIO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION
AUGUST 2, 2022 – 7:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

President Mr. Daum called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Mr. Daum led those in attendance in a prayer and then the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Mr. Powell, Mr. Bronner, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Boehner, Mr. Thamann, Mrs. Kroeger & Mrs. Eadicicco.

OTHER CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Safety Service Director Patrick Ross, Treasurer Brenda Owens

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Boehner and seconded by Mr. Bronner to approve the minutes from the July 19, 2022 meeting. Approval carried by voice vote.

AUDIENCE ASKING PARTICIPATION:

Bob Ashbrock directed a question to Safety Service Director Patrick Ross regarding an email sent to the Safety Service Director in April concerning squatting on City-owned property at the Mill Creek and Smalley Road. Mr. Ross had replied that he would find out who owned the vehicles and remove them, but they are still there. Mr. Ashbrock asked what Mr. Ross' investigation has revealed in terms of ownership and how the cars happened to get there. Mr. Ross replied that he had no idea how they got there, but that he had spoken with the property owner adjacent to that location, and they said that they would get [the cars] moved, but they haven't been moved yet, and Mr. Ross will follow up.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS:

The following email received by the President of Council was read into the record.

"The families and people living on Elm Street and neighboring streets have been plagued by the individuals that have been squatting at 333 Elm Street for over a year now. Ms. Karen Denham lived at this address until she passed away on June 28, 2021, and was an amazing, thoughtful neighbor that would bake Christmas cookies for others. In the months before her death and in the year after, her grandsons and acquaintances have caused nothing but trouble and dangerous activity.

I have found multiple needles in my front and backyard from the foot traffic in and out of the house. I have been told neighbors have videos of drug deals going on in front of the house. The house has been without water services since approximately Feb 2022 and is apparent whenever the doors are open. The yard is full of trash and scrap metal, along with individuals sleeping in tents in the backyard for weeks at a time. There is a never ending collection of bikes as well (all easily seen from Elm Lane).

Since I have lived in Reading the past 5 years, it has been a friendly place where neighbors look out for each other. Living next to 333 Elm Street has proven that. As a single woman living alone, I have had multiple neighbors reassure me that I can contact them for assistance if the house next door threatens my safety. The cops are aware of the situation and have increased patrol on our street this summer when activity began flourishing with the warm weather.

We have been patiently waiting for it to be handled in the courts and be declared foreclosed but it has been over a year. The lack of water, noxious smell, and trash filled backyard has to amount to multiple code violations. We need your help.

Sincerely, Mari Kate (Marion) Stone"

A motion was made by Mr. Powell and seconded by Mr. Bronner to receive and file the communication. The motion carried

by voice vote. Mr. Boehner suggested that the President provide a copy to Mr. Ross, so he can follow up on that. Mr. Daum immediately passed his printed copy to Mr. Ross. Councilman Powell indicated that he had received the same communication and contacted the Safety Service Director about it and asked that he have the Fire Chief and Exterior Property Maintenance Manager to look into it. Mr. Ross stated that the Fire Chief has already been in contact with the health department and that the health department did not find any violations. The health department inspectors actually got inside the house. Since no children live there, there is no violation regarding the lack of water service. The Fire Chief has been in contact with the executor of the estate who could process eviction orders, but that has not happened. Mr. Powell indicated that the house has been in foreclosure since March. Councilwoman Eadicicco indicated that she had also received that correspondence and that she had responded that it takes time for the police department to build a case and reminded people to report any illegal activity they see. She indicated that the police will use all evidence that is sent in, including video.

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

GUEST ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL REPORTS

MAYOR: Robert "Bo" Bemmes: Absent, no report

SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR: Patrick Ross

- Your Duke Bill from this month or last may have a $4 charge on it. It is an error. Gas aggregation ended in May, so everyone was automatically switched over to Duke. This is when the erroneous charge appeared. Rich from Energy Alliances has been in contact with Duke, and there will be credit on it. People are asking about gas aggregation letters from Constellation Energy, since the City used to use them for aggregation, but this is a predatory letter. There was no City of Reading letterhead or logo to indicate a partnership with the City, and it should be disregarded. Aggregation may occur within the next 2 – 3 weeks, and it will not be with Constellation, and the price will be as authorized by Council. If aggregation moves forward, it will be with AEP. Electric aggregation is still in place with Dynegy, and it will be in place through the remainder of this year. Mr. Ross spoke about how billing works and Duke's predatory practice of telling residents that they are being overcharged when they are not. Mr. Ross also spoke about usage and high bills. Everybody got a $133 credit on their bill. This was a one-time credit.
- Recycling has been an issue. Mr. Ross has been trying to meet with somebody from Rumpke to have the issues corrected. "The guy who's in charge of this route has agreed to a meeting." Mr. Ross asks people not to be angry at Dean [Ferrier] regarding the issues, which is mostly missed pickups. Trash pickup has been good, but recycling pickup has been nonexistent in certain areas. The reason for missing pickups has been lack of manpower.
- There will be an ordinance next meeting to award a contract for East North Street paving and spot curbs. The low bid was for $195,760. This is part of the public works SCIP grant program.
- In the next 2 to 3 weeks, the 3rd Street bid specifications will be finalized and going out for bid. There will be a letter delivered to everyone on 3rd Street regarding residents' option to replace the lead pipe water service line to their houses. This will be a separate bid with a separate price to be paid by each property owner. The bid should be out by mid-September.
- Update on 2000 West Street: The Port Authority has been receiving bids for the Phase 1 (above-ground) portion of the property cleanup. Bids are due within the next 2 weeks. Awards should be out by the end of August. Work should start between mid and late September. The Phase 2 (underground) bid package is almost prepared. This involves all below-surface cleanup work that is required by the Ohio EPA. The City is also requiring road access to monitoring wells. Phase 2 work should begin in March. After that, the site will be build-ready.
- At City Hall, there is a complete phone upgrade to be completed by the end of August. This will provide each employee with direct email and voice mail with voicemail to text in email. The changeover to the new finance and payroll software is in the operational activity definition process, so the software company can build the system to match current processes.

There will be training involved with this upgrade.

- National Night Out is ending tonight at 8 PM. Mr. Ross thanks the participants from all departments at the City and County.
- Saturday, August 27 is the American Legion Taste of Reading at Koenig Park from noon to 11 PM.
- School starts this month. Heavy traffic is expected around the schools. Mr. Ross has offered to place directional signs for the Cincinnati Classical Academy to assist out-of-town drivers in arriving there quickly. Mr. Ross asks for patience from all drivers, especially for the first two weeks. Parents picking up students at the public school should arrive on time, but not early, since the early arrivers cause traffic bottlenecks. Almost everyone at the Cincinnati Classical Academy is from outside Reading.
- Mr. Powell asked Mr. Ross about start of paving on 3rd Street. Mr. Ross replied that they will start as soon as possible. It might be similar to how Thurnridge was done. This will happen roughly 3 to 4 months after the bids are awarded. The scope of the project is the water main from Mechanic to Benson, including the optional replacement of lead service pipes, and repaving the road. Start should be early next year. Cost is over 1 million dollars. $400,000 is coming from Duke Energy for replacement of damaged areas caused during the pipeline project. The City has received a $1 million interest-free loan to cover the entire cost. Mr. Powell asked about the possibility of the increasing cost of materials causing an increased project cost. Mr. Ross believes that JMA has factored that into the price.
- Mr. Boehner informed Mr. Ross that Duke has gone through a computer upgrade that has "messed everybody's bill up." If anyone needs to call Duke, the number to call is 800-544-6900. They will send you a usage chart, and if anything looks out of place, they will respond at that number. Mr. Ross indicates that Duke has been very responsive over the years. Mr. Boehner also asked about what the COVID money can be used for and how long we have to use it. Mr. Ross said that grantees under 10 million dollars, like Reading, can use it as revenue replacement, but he will have specifics for the next meeting.
- Mr. Bronner mentioned a Hamilton County Municipal League newsletter article regarding Opioid Settlement money distribution. Mr. Ross indicated that they have our account and routing numbers, so he will have to check with the office personnel to see whether it has been received. Mr. Bronner mentioned possible restrictions on use. It should be 18 payments of $4,000 each. Mr. Ross mentioned placing it in the drug fund as a place for it to go, but he will check with the Law Director. Chief Owens indicated that we have received the first $3,800 of the Opioid Settlement.

LAW DIRECTOR: Dave Stevenson: Absent, no report

TREASURER: Brenda Owens: Report follows

City of Reading
July 2022 Income Tax Receipt Summary
With Prior Years Comparison

Individual Residents Income Taxes

	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 21 to 22
January	$96,093	$110,812	$107,429	$79,333	-26.2%
February	$68,356	$67,807	$45,896	$37,035	-19.3%
March	$117,226	$89,577	$127,056	$131,391	3.4%
April	$415,198	$109,428	$221,576	$457,756	106.6%
May	$77,836	$48,987	$223,455	$102,421	-54.2%
June	$115,093	$99,289	$134,637	$107,043	-20.5%
July	$53,556	$337,009	$82,544	$28,939	-64.9%
August	$70,483	$71,990	$39,361		
September	$102,017	$106,778	$89,782		
October	$38,131	$93,081	$56,061		
November	$54,158	$76,487	$14,763		
December	$58,151	$96,708	$86,298		
Yearly Totals	**$1,266,298**	**$1,307,953**	**$1,228,857**	**$943,918**	
YTD Progress	**$943,358**	**$862,908**	**$942,594**	**$943,918**	**0.1%**

Payroll Withholding Income Taxes

	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 21 to 22
January	$555,799	$539,671	$717,952	$689,143	-4.0%
February	$418,114	$530,926	$462,760	$441,735	-4.5%
March	$403,816	$419,609	$413,361	$434,394	5.1%
April	$718,041	$590,089	$801,135	$752,396	-6.1%
May	$464,702	$453,000	$490,963	$534,911	9.0%
June	$463,205	$441,487	$484,864	$470,151	-3.0%
July	$474,774	$433,643	$507,334	$501,087	-1.2%
August	$410,495	$519,886	$566,411		
September	$519,714	$392,475	$411,837		
October	$457,049	$449,639	$549,184		
November	$454,636	$483,331	$545,750		
December	$458,688	$429,457	$432,363		
Yearly Totals	**$5,799,031**	**$5,683,214**	**$6,383,913**	**$3,823,816**	
YTD Progress	**$3,498,450**	**$3,408,426**	**$3,878,368**	**$3,823,816**	**-1.4%**

Business Profits Income Taxes

	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 21 to 22
January	$14,888	$22,258	$11,981	$48,907	308.2%
February	$37,357	$18,896	$58,854	$24,719	-58.0%
March	$44,127	$77,585	$23,641	$210,097	788.7%
April	$146,628	$26,014	$137,747	$274,272	99.1%
May	$22,169	$21,905	$60,812	$42,806	-29.6%
June	$87,523	$39,477	$87,483	$399,300	356.4%
July	$7,829	$95,430	$43,735	$15,804	-63.9%
August	$50,022	$80,398	$38,207		
September	$61,612	$77,959	$85,263		
October	$16,216	$32,831	$42,542		
November	$13,642	$17,874	$22,412		
December	$63,553	$26,952	$87,159		
Yearly Totals	**$565,565**	**$537,579**	**$699,835**	**$1,015,904**	
YTD Progress	**$360,519**	**$301,564**	**$424,252**	**$1,015,904**	**139.5%**

Total Income Taxes Collected

	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 21 to 22
January	$666,780	$672,741	$837,361	$817,383	-2.4%
February	$523,826	$617,629	$567,510	$503,488	-11.3%
March	$565,169	$586,771	$564,058	$775,881	37.6%
April	$1,279,867	$725,531	$1,160,458	$1,484,424	27.9%
May	$564,707	$523,892	$775,230	$680,137	-12.3%
June	$665,820	$580,253	$706,984	$976,494	38.1%
July	$536,158	$866,082	$633,613	$545,830	-13.9%
August	$531,000	$672,274	$643,978		
September	$683,343	$577,213	$586,882		
October	$511,396	$575,551	$647,787		
November	$522,436	$577,693	$582,925		
December	$580,392	$553,117	$605,819		
Yearly Totals	**$7,630,893**	**$7,528,746**	**$8,312,605**	**$5,783,637**	
YTD Progress	**$4,802,327**	**$4,572,898**	**$5,245,214**	**$5,783,637**	**10.3%**

Total Refunds **2019 = $135,343** **2020 = $132,162** **2021 = $115,450** **2022 YTD Refunds = $154,061**

Brenda A. Owens- City Treasurer 08/01/2022

Mr. Powell asked about the business profit tax receipts being up, and Mrs. Owens talked about estimated taxes likely being the cause.

AUDITOR: Sabrina Smith: Absent, no report

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE: Andy Bronner: No report

UTILITIES, LANDS & BUILDINGS: Mark Bishop

I have been working with Rumpke and the Administration to resolve the trash and mostly the recycling pick-up issues that some residents have been experiencing.

We will be scheduling a committee meeting in the near future to discuss potential easement purchases for City-owned land.

ZONING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT: Dave Powell

Mr. Powell has invited Jerry Newfarmer from Management Partners to speak at the August 16 meeting. His organization performs organizational reviews that Mr. Powell believes will benefit the City.

LAWS & CONTRACTS: Katie Eadicicco

The Laws and Contracts Committee met to discuss the status of the DORA and issues with abandoned and blighted houses throughout the city.

First, the DORA committee, comprised of Bridal District and Chamber of Commerce members, are working on gathering the information needed to complete the application that they will present to City Council.

Nick Diederich has been in touch with Jacobs Engineering to get the zoning maps and survey information for the area included in the DORA. The committee is also working on getting signatures from all the liquor license holders in the DORA. They have received the Safety Plan from Chief Edens and they're completing the Sanitation Plan with the city's Public Works Department and Administration. Once the committee has all this information together, they will submit an application to council and my committee will draft an ordinance regarding the DORA.

Second, I've compiled a list of abandoned and blighted properties throughout the city and brought this to our committee meeting. We discussed creating an ordinance pertaining to condemnation and demolition of properties such as these. Currently, we do not have an ordinance on the books regarding this process.

I met with Patrick Ross yesterday to talk about creating this ordinance. We looked over our current Exterior Property Maintenance Codes and found that they need to be cleaned up. The codes have been added to over the years and there's some overlapping information and some updates needed. Patrick and I are going to meet with Paul Culter with Jacobs Engineering next week to review and update our current Exterior Property Maintenance Codes and work on a section regarding condemnation and demolition.

One last note, I did send my list of blighted properties to Dan Brooks in our Building Department along with some questions as to the process and why some of these have been sitting empty for years. I'm waiting to hear back from Mr. Brooks.

Mr. Daum asked whether 333 Elm was on the list of blighted buildings, and Mrs. Eadicicco said that she has added it to the list.

Mr. Bishop asked about renovations without building permits. Mrs. Eadicicco has no information on that subject, but she has asked Mr. Brooks for some of that information.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY: Shelly Kroeger

Police Department run count for July, 2022

Calls for service 1222
Auto Accidents 29
Booking Original Charges 125
Total Criminal Charges 174

Citations Issued 174

Thank you to the Police Department for hosting the National Night out, which took place this evening at Koenig Park, and thank you to the Fire Department for participating, and thank you to the other agencies that participated as well.

For the month of July, there were arrests for domestic violence, OVI, and assault, theft, and property damage. Vandalism is still happening throughout the City. My son texted me to tell me that somebody thought it was a good idea to do donuts on the football field. Our City crews work too hard for people to be that inconsiderate, not to mention the injuries this could

have caused as a result. Fortunately, there wasn't much damage. If you have any information about the football field, please call the police station. Please be vigilant, and if you see something, say something. And remember, if you have an emergency, you need to dial 911. You can still call the non-emergency number, and if there's nobody here, it will be transferred to the County, who will then dispatch.

Fire Departments run count for July, 2022

EMS Responses 138
Fire Responses 70
Total Responses 208

From Chief Edens' report: As a follow-up to the speed report that was forwarded to each council member, over 2022 and 2021 in the last 19 months, we had 572 auto accidents in the top 15 areas of the City. Of those, only 4 were located on East Galbraith, east of the 2300 block. This is a very low number, and I would not recommend any changes of the traffic control devices in the area.

Mrs. Eadicicco commented regarding vandalism. She gets called a lot about locked bathrooms at parks and shelters. It is her understanding that when the park is rented that the bathrooms should be unlocked, but, unfortunately, because of the vandalism we are seeing, the City cannot leave them unlocked at all times, like they have in the past. That is [one] of the side effects we are having with vandalism.

Mr. Bishop asked about installing removable bollards for the football field. Mr. Ross said that they are keeping the wide gate closed at night, and this will prevent cars from driving through while still allowing walkers to get to the track. Discussion followed regarding daytime access, especially for emergency vehicles. Mr. Ross said that he will look into it.

SERVICE: Bob Boehner

- Public works crews have been out patching holes in the streets.
- The mulcher has been out collecting branches nonstop.
- City crews have painted the soccer fields. They repaired a water leak on Keith Drive. City crews also repaired a water main break at 124 West Vine Street and repaired the road and another water main break at Reading and Maple. City crews also repaired a second water main break on Maple Drive.
- City crews replaced a water valve at the swimming pool. They repaired a water service line leak on Market near Mechanic Street, and City crews have been out trimming brush near roadways.
- The roof at City Hall is leaking again over the Caucus room. Three roofing companies have been called to investigate and give bids for a new roof. It doesn't make sense to keep patching and putting band-aids on it.
- City crews repaired the roadway in front of the fire department on Market street. They also painted the curbing throughout the City.
- A City crew cleaned up the dead end of east North Street from overgrown brush along the walking trail and the creek.
- We have an ordinance here tonight to purchase an new chipper / mulcher. We have an emergency clause on it, because it's getting close to that time when we need to get the equipment in. Lead time is uncertain. Mr. Stevenson has provided information on some other ordinances.
- Proceeds from the Nivison property still in the CIC needs to go back into the 340 account, since that's where the money was taken from to start the project. Mr. Stevenson is going to talk to CIC to have the money put back into the general fund, so we can move it back to the 340 account.
- Mr. Stevenson wants to speak with the Auditor to determine how to direct proceeds from renting out service trucks and scrap metal sales. The City will soon start street sweeping in Amberly Village and charging them, so there are more funds that go back to the street maintenance account. Mr. Stevenson says that there is a state law that allows for proceeds from the sale of scrap metal to be used for general expenses of the service department. The valve exerciser needs to be put out to bid. Patrick and John Vance are working on that requirement. As soon as that bid is out, we will have an ordinance. As soon as Dave gets his information, we will have two more ordinances.

RECREATION: Scott Thamann: No report

OTHER BUSINESS: None

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

READING OF RESOLUTIONS: None

READING OF ORDINANCES:

(1) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO PURCHASE A MULCHER/CHIPPER FOR THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED $87,000.00 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Mr. Boehner motioned to suspend the rules requiring a second and third reading. Mrs. Eadicicco seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Powell, yes; Mr. Bronner, yes; Mr. Bishop, yes; Mr. Boehner, yes; Mr. Thamann, yes; Mrs. Kroger, yes; Mrs Eadicicco, yes. 7 yes. The rules requiring a second and third reading are suspended.

Discussion by Mr Powell: With the cost being $87,000, is that on the State list? Mr. Boehner responded affirmatively. The actual cost is $86,382, and Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Boehner thought that limiting the cost to $87,000 should cover the cost of the chipper / mulcher and an unknown amount for freight.

Mr. Boehner moved to adopt the ordinance. Mr. Bishop seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Powell, yes; Mr. Bronner, yes; Mr. Bishop, yes; Mr. Boehner, yes; Mr. Thamann, yes; Mrs. Kroger, yes; Mrs. Eadicicco, yes. 7 yes.

The ordinance is adopted. **Ordinance number 2022-22.**

(2) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO PURCHASE A VALVE EXERCISER FOR THE WATER DEPARTMENT AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED $85,000.00 (Second Reading)

Mr. Powell moved to table the ordinance, and Mr. Bronner seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mr. Powell, yes; Mr. Bronner, yes; Mr. Bishop, yes; Mr. Boehner, yes; Mr. Thamann, yes; Mrs. Kroger, yes; Mrs Eadicicco, yes. 7 yes. The ordinance is tabled.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Mr. Bishop spoke about EV cars and charging units that can be installed in houses. This requires a permit and a licensed electrician.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Boehner moved to adjourn. Mrs. Kroger seconded. Motion carried by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.

X_____ X_____

Dwight Daum **Dwight Daum**

Clerk of Council Pro Tem

President of Council