

**CITY OF READING, OHIO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION
OCTOBER 18, 2022 – 7:30 PM**

For the full detail of this evening's Council Meeting, please visit <http://www.icrctv.com/communities>, click on "Reading," and then click "Reading City Council 10-18-2022."

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:

Mayor Bo Bemmes & Clerk of Council Carla Kacher.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve September 20 (Legislative) Council Minutes made by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mr. Boehner. Motion carried by a voice vote. Motion to approve October 4 (Regular) Council Minutes WITH CORRECTIONS by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mr. Bronner. Motion carried by voice vote.

AUDIENCE ASKING PARTICIPATION: None

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS:

(1)

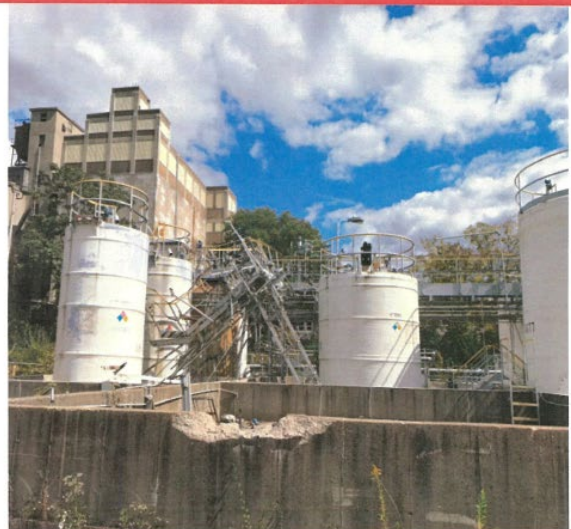
Centennial Industrial Park at Reading

Asbestos Abatement Project

Request for Public Comments

"The Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority (The Port) will begin asbestos abatement and remediation efforts as the next stage of development on the former Dow Chemical plant site in Reading, Ohio. The public is invited to review the details on the asbestos abatement project, provide comment or submit questions via the link below. The link can also be found on the City of Reading Website or Facebook Page. The Port acquired the 25-acre property in 2019 as part of its industrial revitalization strategy to repurpose existing land to attract advanced manufacturing companies to the region."

Link: <https://www.cincinnatiport.org/centennial-industrial-park/>



Motion made by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mrs. Eadicicco to mark the communication received and filed.
Motion carried by voice vote.

(2) EMAILS FROM RESIDENTS REGARDING ICRC:

EMAIL FROM STEVE CULVER:

On Oct 16, 2022, at 8:39 AM, Fuse <sculver@fuse.net> wrote:

Please continue to support the ICRC broadcasting in the Reading area. I attend St. John UCC in Reading and we submitted our weekly recorded worship services to ICRC for broadcast. Many of our members watch it and we have gained new members because of it. In addition, it provides positive message programming- something we all could use more of!

Thank you,

Steve Culver

EMAIL FROM REV. TORIE FRONT:

From: Torie Front <revtorie@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, October 14, 2022 7:15 AM

Subject: ICRC

Please vote in favor of continuing the partnership with ICRC as this is an important part of the ministry of St. John United Church of Christ to our community.

Sincerely,

Rev. Torie Front

Rev. Torie Front

St. John UCC (Reading)

President, Cincinnati Polo Club

EMAIL FROM ALLAN RETTBERG:

From: Allan Rettberg <allanrettberg@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2022 10:38 PM

Subject: Reading Historical Society

Hello,

I'd like to express my support to continue using ICRC to broadcast Reading events. As the President of the Reading Historical Society, ICRC has been a great benefit to our organization, and the City of Reading. The City of Reading website highlights the ICRC documentary of the Reading Doughboy on its home page. The documentary emphatically states the importance of the tradition and service to the armed forces in the Reading community.

I find it disturbing that the vote on the continuation of ICRC is being done without input from the Reading community. I didn't find out about the vote until yesterday, and Reverend Torie from St. John's Church was unaware, as was the Superintendent of Reading Community Schools, Dr. Damon Davis.

Listening to the Council meeting on October 4, it appears that you are representing the cares of Reading Council, and not the interests of Reading citizens and organizations. I would venture to say that 99.9% of Reading citizens have no idea that the ICRC contract is expiring and is in danger of being discontinued. Weren't you elected to represent the desires of Reading citizens?

The City of Reading no longer has a local newspaper, and that has left a giant void. Now (it appears) that you want to eliminate the second best alternative to building community connectivity. I personally believe that this is a major mistake. I also believe that the services that ICRC provides are more than worth the minimal additional expenses.

(And, by the way, you might want to update the Council Members on the City of Reading website: Randy Fischesser, Don Lindeman, Tony Gertz, Tom Lynd, and Dave Powell are still listed as Council Members.)

*Sincerely,
Allan Rettberg*

EMAIL FROM PATRICK SCOTT:

From: Patrick Scott <Patrick.Scott@cumulus.com>

Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2022 4:14 PM

Subject: Please don't cancel ICRC

Hi Reading Council,

There is a lot more the ICRC than just money. I am disappointed you all want to cancel instead of using it to bring in more business. Attached are my concerns.

Side note, you want to bring in more revenue to the city, use ICRC to create edit and distribute a video as to why businesses should bring their business to the city.

ESP doesn't have good quality, that is false. Also, they only stream council meetings. ICRC provides so much more than that and the residents should know what they have access to, and they don't.

Thanks!

***Patrick Scott
Program Director
Cat Country 94.1 - WNNF FM***

To the City of Reading,

I am a resident of Reading and I am really disappointed hearing how the city wants to cancel ICRC. I understand money is tight for many people and cities across the country and Reading is no different. But cutting a service that is offered to the citizens of this community shouldn't happen. I know the response will be, but we are going with ESP, why? They don't offer a quarter of what ICRC offers.

I am an ICRC product. I volunteered there when I was in high school to get more training about my career field. I worked there for a few years as well. The amount of education I got from the ICRC was awesome! Reading schools don't offer media classes anymore and if a student wants to learn about media, they will have to go to the vocational school. If they don't want to go to a vocational school, well I guess they must if they want to learn media. ICRC is there for educational proposes too. They can teach that student everything they have to offer to better prepare that student for a college with a media school.

I know it all comes down to money, so ask this, if the cost of ESP is cheaper, what are they cutting to make it cheaper? Well, I can answer that, everything except the council meetings. No education, no sports for the community, no church broadcasting, no website or digital services, no Historical Society broadcasting. To me, that is major loss for the community.

Mayor Bemmes has said he wants to save money by cancelling ICRC. The city gets a franchise fee payment for both cable providers. By law, the city is allowed to collect 5% of the gross revenue for cable TV services only. This doesn't include internet or phone revenues. This is a pass thru charge to subscribers, so only residents who have Spectrum or AltaFiber are paying the fees, not the taxpayer. Of the 5% the city collects, 2% is paid to the ICRC and the city keeps the other 3%. Even if they vote to cancel ICRC, the city will still be getting the money even though ICRC will no longer be provided to the community.

ICRC offers many different things to the residents. There is a massive value that ICRC brings to the community. Just the educational value alone should be enough to keep it around. Reading is not using all the offerings from ICRC, but we could start, and this could lead into other revenue makers. For example, if you wanted to do a video of why businesses should consider Reading as a location for their business, ICRC would come out, video it, edit it and play it on their channels, Reading's website and social media. ESP doesn't offer that or if they do, they will charge more to do so. ICRC, it is included.

As I said above, I am product of ICRC, I am in charge of a radio station here in Cincinnati and I have to say, I would have never gotten my start if it weren't for the ICRC. Keep ICRC and use it to our advantage so the city can have other, more creative revenue streams. There are more ways to use ICRC to help Reading, than there just by getting rid of it. ESP is cheaper, because they don't offer nearly what the ICRC does.

Respectfully submitted – Patrick Scott, Jefferson Ave.

Motion made by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mrs. Eadicicco to mark the communication received and filed.
Motion carried by voice vote.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

(1) Tim Neuman (ICRC Executive Director)

"Before I begin my presentation, I want to refer back to the last meeting when I went over all of the types of videos ICRC can produce. I wanted to mention another video project produced back in August of 2012. We worked with Paul Gallo from the Fire Department to produce a training video for the new Pierce Aerial truck that Reading purchased. I spent a day here recording the workshop then ICRC staff came out and spent the day getting the footage of the truck. Then Paul and I worked on the editing. This is another great example of the types of videos we can produce for Reading. The video was not broadcast but was made available to the fire Department for training purposes and was well received.

After my ICRC board meeting last Wednesday evening I sent an email that had two items of information to all council members. The first item is an amendment to the current Reading and ICRC contract that I hope you all read. It gives you another month to make your decision about leaving the ICRC. You now have till December 1st.

The second item was a list of expanded service that Production Manager, Jason Dudley and I discussed and developed to provide additional service to the city of Reading. I hope you had a chance to read it. I decided I would address some of the questions I feel you might have.

First a brief summery. As an expanded service for the City of Reading, the ICRC has proposed assuming management of both the city's website, and its social media pages. Reading's online presence is currently updated irregularly leading to a gap in communication with the public as well as lost opportunities for the promotion of the city and city events.

-What would this cost the city?

There would be no additional cost for this service

-How would the communication flow work?

This can be determined as we work through the process. Our initial thought would be that city staff could send us information and we would work to create graphics or videos for social media as well as come up with the verbiage. We would then post it to the website and social media pages in a timely manner. This can also include getting meeting minutes, agendas, etc. posted to the website. Additionally, we would plan on actively curating content, but would not post anything until it has been approved by either council or the Safety Service Director. This would not include website design services, but would include any other updates.

-What is the benefit to Reading?

Currently the city's social media and website are not updated regularly. Improving on this communication would benefit the community and council in a few ways. First, increased communication with the public not only allows for better transparency, but will also lead to increased community engagement in events and conversations. Additionally, a key component of economic development and growth is the marketing that social media and a relevant website can provide. In sum, while taking work off of the plate of city staff, this would also provide additional value via positive effects on economic growth. As an immediate example of something we would update - the landing page on the website boasts about a trailer for the Reading Doughboy documentary we did in 2020, but was never actually updated when the documentary was released... more than two years ago.

-What would you post?

The ICRC would only make posts approved by the Safety Service Director or a designated member of staff. Ideally, the city will appoint an active liaison to work with ICRC on both online/social media content as well as videos and other services. Initial work would begin on the website to make sure it is current and up to date.

-What access would this require?

ICRC already has access and admin privileges for the 'City of Reading' Facebook page. The only additional access we would need would be the city's website.

-What is the long term goal or plan?

Initially, we would want to concentrate on getting the website and social media up to date and accurate. As mentioned in another part of this Q&A, the landing page of the website has not been updated since a 2020 documentary release from ICRC. Longer term, we would be working with Reading to build positive and up-to-date platforms for communication with both community members and prospective businesses. This could include expanding the platforms that Reading is currently accessible on, if that was of interest to the city. On the most basic level, the plan is to promote the community as well as create communication paths that are accessible to everyone in the community. ‘

-How does this solve the cost question?

Though this does not decrease the membership calculations for the ICRC it make significant steps to expand our partnership with the City of Reading. Taking this off of tasks list for city staff will create additional time to devote to other topics and tasks. Hiring an outside company to handle marketing, social media, and the website would be far more expensive. Additionally, communities across the country have leveraged social media to promote their community, expand economic growth, and bring in extra revenue. There have even been collegiate level studies showing the effectiveness of social media influence in economic growth. As an additional note in this regard - membership in the ICRC includes and all services we provide... including services we may not be aware of needing now.

-Are you doing this for other communities?

While we are not the exclusive managers for other communities at this point, there are other communities we assist with creating content- for some of the communities this means that we are creating and posting directly on the community's page. We always look for new ways to better serve our communities and expand our services. Recently this has meant adding a podcast studio, and venturing more directly into social media is a continuation of this effort.

To wrap up...

After looking at my presentation from last council meeting, I made a few observations.

During his report, Mayor Bemmes mentioned several events that recently had taken place in the city including the Bridal district event that happened on Sept 21st. This is a great example of an event that ICRC could have been involved with. We could have created a promotional video and made a highlights reel of the event and posted on the website and social media.

During my presentation earlier that night, I highlighted several Historical Society projects that ICRC has been involved in... including many years of covering the Settlement Day Dinner... producing the Doughboy Documentary... and our latest partnership is working with President Allan Rettberg to assist him in recording the monthly talks hosted by the Historical Society.

So it really surprised me mayor... when you mentioned the Historical Society and how you wished they had more support. And that they need more support.

All I can say is if Reading continues it's membership in the ICRC, The Historical society will always have our support.

The other thing from the last meeting is something that Mr Bishop said... he used the analogy "we're paying a buffet and we will never be heavy eaters"...my question is... why not?

I believe the resources ICRC can provide will increase community engagement and will create opportunities for economic development and growth in Reading."

ICRC Funding and VSP/Franchise Fee Bullet Points

- Cable Act of 1984 established guidelines and procedures for cable TV operators
- The law required cable operators to pay franchise fees up to 5% of their gross revenue generated from cable TV subscribers in accordance with the franchise
- Cable operators are permitted to pass these fees through to subscribers
- Every quarter, municipalities receive the full 5%, retain 3% and pay ICRC 2%
- Amount from each community is based on the number of subscribers
- Fees are based on the percentage of each subscribers bill
- Each subscriber pays the same rate regardless of the community
- Each Community receives services of a value greater than the individual contribution
- ICRC mails out invoices quarterly to each municipality
- In 2007, the state of Ohio Department of Commerce took over cable TV regulation. From that time forward the ICRC's primary focus has been producing local content and providing media resources to our member communities, their school districts and their residents.

- Cable companies are now called Video Service Providers and franchise fees are referred to as VSP fees

Reading Social Media Bullets and Q&A

Summary

As an expanded service for the City of Reading, the ICRC has proposed assuming management of both the city's website, and its social media pages. Reading's online presence is currently updated irregularly leading to a gap in communication with the public as well as lost opportunities for the promotion of the city and city events.

-What would this cost the city?

- There would be no additional cost to the city for these service.

-What is the benefit to Reading?

- The city's social media and website will be updated regularly.
- This would benefit the community and council in a many ways.
- First, the increased communication with the public will allow for better transparency,
- Next, this will increase community engagement in events and conversations.
- Additionally, a key component of economic development and growth is the marketing that social media and a relevant website can provide.
- In summery, while taking work off of the plate of city staff, this would also provide additional value via positive effects on economic growth.
- As an immediate example of something we would update - the landing page on Reading's website boasts about a trailer for the Doughboy documentary ICRC produced in 2020... but the page was never updated when the documentary was released more than two years ago.

-How would the communication flow work?

- We would determine this as we work through the process.
- Initial city staff could send us information and we would work to create graphics or videos for social media as well as come up with the verbiage.
- We would then post the content to the website and social media pages in a timely manner.
- This can also include getting meeting minutes, agendas, etc. posted to the website.
- We would actively curate content, but would not post anything until it has been approved by either council or the Safety Service Director.
- This would not include website design services, but would include any other updates.

-What would we post?

- The ICRC would only make posts approved by the Safety Service Director or a designated member of staff.
- Initial work would begin on the website to make sure it is current and up to date.
- Ideally, the city will appoint an active liaison to work with ICRC on both online/social media content as well as videos and other services.

Reading Social Media Bullets and Q&A

-What access would this require?

- ICRC already has access and admin privileges for the 'City of Reading' Facebook page. The only additional access we would need would be to the city's website.

-What is the long term goal or plan?

- Again the first priority is getting the website and social media up to date and accurate. As mentioned before, the landing page of the website has not been updated since 2020.
- Longer term, we would be working with Reading to build positive and up-to-date platforms for communication with both community members and prospective businesses.
- This could include expanding the platforms that Reading is currently accessible on, if that was of interest to the city.
- On the most basic level, the plan is to promote the community as well as create communication paths that are accessible to everyone in Reading.

-How does this solve the cost question?

- Though this does not decrease the membership calculations for the ICRC it does make significant steps to expand our partnership with the City of Reading.
- Taking this work load off of the plate of city staff, will create additional time for them to devote to other topics and tasks.
- Hiring an outside company to handle marketing, social media, and the website would be far more expensive.
- Additionally, communities across the country have leveraged social media to promote their community, expand economic growth, and bring in additional revenue.
- There have even been collegiate level studies showing the effectiveness of social media influence in economic growth.

-Are you doing this for other communities?

- While we are not the exclusive managers for any one community at this point, there are other communities we assist with creating content.
- For some of the communities this means that we are creating and posting directly on the community's page.
- We always look for new ways to better serve our communities and expand our services. Recently this has meant adding a podcast studio, and venturing more directly into social media is a continuation of this effort.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None Requested

LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

READING OF RESOLUTIONS:

READING OF ORDINANCES:

(1) AN ORDINANCE DIRECTING THE SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR TO TERMINATE THE AGREEMENT

**WITH THE INTERCOMMUNITY CABLE REGULATORY COMMISSION (ICRC) FOR VIDEO AND BROADCASTING SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF READING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.
(SECOND READING)**

Discussion...ICRC - Mark Bishop, Councilman Ward 3:

"I appreciate everyone's concern. I'm also grateful for the work that ICRC has done for Reading these many years. I was trained and made Public Access videos over 40 years ago with ICRC. but in my view, this as a business decision whether to hire company A for \$52000/year or company B for \$24000/year. Yes, I recognize that it's a comparison between paying for a buffet or paying for just what the city needs, to record and broadcast Council meetings. And with enough time with ICRC, we could probably make endless amazing videos about our great city, but we must remember...

It takes \$1.5 million in taxable income to generate \$30,000 in taxes for the city to spend. It doesn't come easy for my family, my neighbors or the city of Reading.

Arthur Laffler, member of President Reagan's Economic Policy Advisory Board once said "Government spending is taxation". Bloomberg Just announced today there is a 100% chance of recession. I think we know that.

We'd love to add personnel and restore the salaries of our city employees that have faced cuts to their pay over the years. Many are doing the jobs of multiple people for less money.

This savings would probably cover the deficit of funding needed to replace worn artificial turf in the stadium in 7 to 10 years if that happens. It would pay for the tables for Koenig Park, a new roof on the shelter or the skyrocketing fuel and energy costs the city is facing this year and next. These are difficult financial times for everyone. And no one wants to raise taxes.

Given all the needs of the city, if we took a vote tonight as to whether the city should pay for the videotaping of non-city functions at a cost of \$28,000 per year. That's entirely for activities that fall outside of direct city business. I for one, could not support that. The city now has an option it didn't have previously. Rest assured; this is not a forever decision. It will come up for review again in the next 2 years. Then we can evaluate our options going forward. And I suggest that future contracts like these always have an actual start and end date when possible.

But as times change, technology has given us the opportunity to grow and learn. The way we think about broadcast media, and the means and the cost to produce and distribute content have changed dramatically. We record professional level video on iPhones and Go Pros and instantly view the content on Facebook, YouTube and Websites.

And let's face it, nobody in Reading is doing a remake of Casablanca or Star Wars or making movies for IMAX. We're recording parades, worship services and only the occasional edited and produced video like the Dough boy video we all like. I volunteer with 3 organizations where we've had to record, post and even run hybrid zoom meetings in front of an audience. This change is all very manageable and can be accomplished much easier and cheaper than ever before possible. Many of our own kids produce and edit movies in iMovie, some on a daily basis. This is an opportunity for both savings and growth. The way we spend taxpayer money as a government has to be continually evaluated also.

This is why I ran for office, and why I'm grateful to be able to serve the people of Reading."

Ordinance was declared a second reading only.

**(2) AN ORDINANCE DIRECTING THE SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A TWO (2) YEAR AGREEMENT WITH ESP MEDIA TO PROVIDE VIDEO AND STREAMING SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF READING BEGINNING ON JANUARY 1, 2023 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY
(SECOND READING)**

Ordinance was declared a second reading only.

(3) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR TO PURCHASE 35 NEW PICNIC TABLES FOR OUR CITY PARKS AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$30,000.

Discussion was held about how the discounted (15%) pricing is only good for 15 days. Motion made by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger to add both the emergency clause and section 4 (explaining the need for the emergency) to the Ordinance. Motion carried by 7-0 roll call vote.

Motion made by Mrs. Eadicicco, seconded by Mr. Boehner to suspend the rule that requires a second and third reading. Motion carried by 7-0 roll call vote. Motion made by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger to adopt the ordinance. Motion carried by 7-0 roll call vote

ORDINANCE ADOPTED

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2022-30

Ordinance was declared a first reading only.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

Katie Eadicicco: Laws & Contracts Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, 24 6:30 p.m.
in Council Chambers

Andy Bronner: Finance Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 25 at 7:00 p.m.
in Council Chambers.

Bo Bemmes: October 22, Sts Peter and Paul Academy's "Running Scared 5K" at 6:00 p.m. at the Stadium.
October 22, Fall Festival and Costume Contest from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran.
October 29, "Tommy Lee's Spooky Get Down" at 8:00 p.m. at the Reading Community Arts Center.
October 31, Halloween, Trick or Treating from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
November 6, Community Tailgate Party at 12:30 p.m. at Haffey.
December 2, Crib Dedication with Santa at 6:30 p.m. at the corner of Reading Road and Benson.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn came from Mr. Bronner and was seconded by Mr. Bishop. Motion carried by voice vote. There being no further business, the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:50 pm.

X _____
Carla Kacher
Clerk of Council

X _____
Dwight Daum
President of Council