

**CITY OF READING, OHIO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION
JANUARY 3, 2023 – 7:30 PM**

For the full detail of this evening's Council Meeting, please visit www.watchreadingohio.com.

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, Treasurer Brenda Owens, Auditor Sabrina Smith & Clerk of Council Carla Kacher.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve December 20, 2023 (Legislative) Council Minutes made by Mrs. Eadicicco, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger. Motion carried by a voice vote.

AUDIENCE ASKING PARTICIPATION:

Bob Ashbrock (221 Walnut):

(1) Bob commented that he was both "pleased and surprised" with the quick turnaround of the ESP website link (www.watchreadingohio.com) ready for public access on the City of Reading website. Would like to see the incorrect fee schedules for the building department be updated by the next meeting to reflect the proper fee schedules.

(2) Requested that a report be prepared for the benefit of Council, as well as the public, regarding the COVID relief funds. He has concerns as to the approaching deadlines of when the money must be spent. Would like to see the funds used for one of the following uses: (1) elimination of lead piping in a municipal water distribution system, (2) sewer improvements and (3) infrastructure (ex. sidewalk on Hunt Road).

Motion by Mr. Boehner, seconded by Mr. Powell to extend Bob Ashbrock's communication with Council.
Motion carried by voice vote.

Mr. Boehner would like to see these funds go towards the repair of our Storm Water Pipes.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Email from Don Lykins expressing appreciation of Officer Teeple:

"City officials,

Don Lykins here. I reside at 8415 Reading Road. My family has lived, worked and owned businesses in Reading for over 62 years now.

Reading has a serious homeless problem and crime problem.

Yet the Mayor refuses to acknowledge it, telling everyone "Reading doesn't have a crime issue and the police are doing a fantastic job according to the top 10 CEO's".

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*Mayor has told in me a few months ago when I finally spoke with him after 10 attempts:
“Mr Lykins, you are the only one to ever complain about the police”.*

*And I can’t get the Chief, nor Mayor Bemmes, nor Patrick Ross, nor Shelly Kroeger to meet with me to discuss proof of this. Won’t even return calls. **I’ve had enough!!!!!!***

See attached video from one of my security cameras from Sunday, 1Jan2023, 9:32PM look at the 21:31:39 mark and you’ll hear 2 shots fired. This is across from my house at 8415 Reading Road.

The homeless guy threw a rock at the car while it was parked at Vibes on Reading Road (on another video I have, not sent), then at BP 2 ladies exit the car pursue the guy and fired two shots at him, missing.

The police have all of this footage and are investigating.

Homeless:

There is a homeless camp behind CircleK. I know this as I hired a homeless person to work for me, trying to help him out, and he told me the whole story. In summer months there are a dozen or more people living in those woods. There are homeless people living in and around Reading and Galbraith, under the bridge and in the small woods on Galbraith.

Crime:

Crime has been rising in Reading for several years (ever since Chief Edens took over, oddly). FBI reports show this. My own 14 Felony thefts/break-ins over last few years which I’ve reported show this as well, with NO arrests, no indictments. Criminals know they won’t be arrested unless caught in the act.

Solution:

1. *More police. City should hire 5-6 more officers. I’ve sent FBI reports on staffing to the Chief/Mayor/Ross/Shelly Kroeger – nothing.. crickets. Very disturbing.*
2. *Use Hamilton County Detectives to augment our force. Golf Manor does this along with many other communities. Chief Snow did this in the past -I was told.*
3. *Get the police better crime fighting tools:*
 - a. *High Resolution cameras at the corner of Galbraith and Reading intersection*
 - b. *Finger printing camera to detect finger prints and foot prints. Greet Township Police have this and have solved some very complicated crimes with it.*
 - c. *DNA detection kits for our detectives. Hamilton county use these frequently.*
4. *Change the culture at RPD from a hands off, to aggressive policing. Every officer should conduct fingerprints and conduct investigations, like when Snow was Chief.*

Don Lykins, 513-305-4737, dlykins@cinci.rr.com”

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

Katie Eadicicco's comments in response to Mr. Lykins letter:

First, it says in the letter that police have a copy of the surveillance video and are investigating. So I'm not sure what the issue is there because that's what they're supposed to be doing.

To say that the police are unaware of the homelessness in the city is false. I can assure you that they are as well as Arlington Heights and Lockland. I don't understand how this burden falls solely on our police department when there are a lot of factors and systemic issues that create homelessness.

Also, and I don't like to say that because I know it sounds cliché, but this isn't just a Reading problem. It's nationwide. And it's not a new problem. I grew up here and played in the woods around the Mill Creek and I remember even back then we would see tents and blankets and knew people were living under a bridge and we just knew to stay away.

Same goes for the crime and drugs. I know it's frustrating when you have a problem house on your street, we've dealt with that issue ourselves, but we have to understand that investigations take time. Police need to legally gather evidence and have enough evidence to convict and in most cases the police cannot comment on an active investigation. But to say that they are not doing anything about crime, again, is false. I have security cameras myself and have plenty of videos of them patrolling throughout the night, even driving up and down the alley behind my house.

Now a lot of these solutions cost a lot of money and we can't just make that materialize. It would be great if we could, but that's not how it works.

And I would also prefer not to live in a police state. I like our community policing. As an example, years ago when my daughter was little we were walking down the street and she fell and skinned her knee. An officer happened to be driving by and he stopped and got his first aid kit out of the trunk of his cruiser and treated her knee and put a band-aid on and made sure she wasn't scared. I'd rather live in a community with a police department like that than one with guns blazing and aggressive policing.

One more note, you can't just call any crime a felony. There are standards within our justice system that determines that and it's done by investigators and prosecutors and there's certain criteria that a crime has to meet to be considered a misdemeanor or felony. Calling something a felony doesn't necessarily make it so.

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

GUEST ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL REPORTS:

MAYOR: Robert "Bo" Bemmes:

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas, great holidays filled with family and friends and hope everyone is off to a great start for 2023. As with all years we as a city had our share of good days as well as our share of sad,

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challenging ones. It always feels good to me to know we live in a community where we support each other through the best and worst of times and our thoughts and prayers go out to everyone who needs them.

As a City we had another productive year providing the best possible City services for our residents, businesses, schools and organizations. At City Hall we work very hard every day with the manpower and equipment we are given while living within our means. I want to thank each of you in this room, all of our elected and appointed officials, our Safety and Services Director, each of Department heads and all of our dedicated employees for doing your part in making sure we operate in an efficient, economical and effective way. We will continue to strive every day to do our best and get even better while at the same time thanking God constantly for the resources and many blessings He has sent our way.

I also want to continue to thank everyone who contributes in any way to make our City the great place it is. Our wonderful Churches and their ministries continue to reach out to and help those in need. Our excellent Schools continue to help educate and prepare our young students to succeed in a very challenging world. Our outstanding youth organizations with their many incredible volunteers keep our youth busy and teach them the value of teamwork, sportsmanship and hard work. And thanks to those of you who keep an eye out for your neighbors, pick up litter from our streets and in our parks and those of you who drive responsively keeping an eye out for pedestrians especially our young students making their way to and from school.

Thanks also to our American Legion, our Fraternal Order of Eagles, our Kiwanis, our Knights of Saint John, our Historical Society, our Chamber of Commerce, our Reading Bridal District, the volunteers who make our Farmers Market possible and our many generous businesses for all that they do for our City.

Since our last meeting our Police department had the speed trailer on Burkhart avenue to monitor how fast cars were traveling and when and also how many cars were using Burkhart. Also after a search warrant was served for both criminal and administrative purposes at 333 Elm one suspect was charged with three charges related to drugs. The house has been condemned and boarded up. Our two new Police officers, Officers Robert Haussermann and Charles Brown have joined our Police Department and we are glad to have them.

We have been awarded a \$265,000 SORTA grant to repave Columbia avenue from Reading Road to Lockland.

We used approximately 280 tons of salt (at \$80 per ton-\$22,400) during the snow/ice event before Christmas. Also members of our Service department were working with temperatures well below zero on Christmas Eve to repair two water main breaks on Lory Lane and Keith Drive so residents would have water running.

We will meet with MSD soon to find out when their sewer project will begin on Reading Road with the reminder that two lanes of Reading Road will be closed for a good part of this year

SAFETY/SERVICE DIRECTOR: Patrick Ross: *(No Report, Absent)*

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LAW DIRECTOR: Dave Stevenson: *(No Report, Absent)*

TREASURER: Brenda Owens

**City of Reading
2022 Year End 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	\$36,571	-7.1%
September	\$102,017	\$106,778	\$89,782	\$79,408	-11.6%
October	\$38,131	\$93,081	\$56,061	\$63,966	14.1%
November	\$54,158	\$76,487	\$14,763	\$64,047	333.8%
December	\$58,151	\$96,708	\$86,298	\$46,897	-45.7%
Yearly Totals	\$1,266,298	\$1,307,953	\$1,228,857	\$1,234,807	
YTD Progress	\$1,266,298	\$1,307,953	\$1,228,857	\$1,234,807	0.5%

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	\$591,928	4.5%
September	\$519,714	\$392,475	\$411,837	\$464,052	12.7%
October	\$457,049	\$449,639	\$549,184	\$606,041	10.4%
November	\$454,636	\$483,331	\$545,750	\$493,632	-9.5%
December	\$458,688	\$429,457	\$432,363	\$462,692	7.0%
Yearly Totals	\$5,799,031	\$5,683,214	\$6,383,913	\$6,442,162	
YTD Progress	\$5,799,031	\$5,683,214	\$6,383,913	\$6,442,162	0.9%

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	\$22,399	-41.4%
September	\$61,612	\$77,959	\$85,263	\$336,599	294.8%
October	\$16,216	\$32,831	\$42,542	\$22,564	-47.0%
November	\$13,642	\$17,874	\$22,412	\$15,798	-29.5%
December	\$63,553	\$26,952	\$87,159	\$48,456	-44.4%
Yearly Totals	\$565,565	\$537,579	\$699,835	\$1,461,720	
YTD Progress	\$565,565	\$537,579	\$699,835	\$1,461,720	108.9%

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	\$650,899	1.1%
September	\$683,343	\$577,213	\$586,882	\$880,060	50.0%
October	\$511,396	\$575,551	\$647,787	\$692,571	6.9%
November	\$522,436	\$577,693	\$582,925	\$573,477	-1.6%
December	\$580,392	\$553,117	\$605,819	\$558,046	-7.9%
Yearly Totals	\$7,630,893	\$7,528,746	\$8,312,605	\$9,138,690	
YTD Progress	\$7,630,893	\$7,528,746	\$8,312,605	\$9,138,690	9.9%

Total Refunds	2019 =	\$135,343	2020 =	\$132,162	2021 =	\$115,450	2022 YTD Refunds =	\$169,800
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Brenda A. Owens- City Treasurer 01/03/2023

AUDITOR: Sabrina Smith:

The Auditor's office ended 2022 with 12 payables in it. This is a testament to our great department heads and administration communicating with everyone within City Hall. The GAAP for 2022 has already started. This is to get a healthy start with our audit.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

FINANCE: Andy Bronner

With a new year upon us I spent some time comparing the end of month reports, generated by Sabrina, from December 2021 to November 2022. Of the 31 different funds, 15 had more money, 4 had less but one of those is the General Fund 101 which is pending a \$2,000,000 transfer from the City Earnings Tax 220 fund which would still leave both funds with more money than last December. 12 funds remained exactly the same.

We ended November 2022 with \$13,118,846.18. This is \$2,277,449.91 more than December 2021. I know this is a vague analysis, but ultimately we are trending in the right direction.

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UTILITIES, LANDS & BUILDINGS: Mark Bishop

The UL&B Committee has scheduled a meeting for January 11, 2023 at 6:00 pm . This meeting will specifically address a proposed ordinance by Mr. Boehner titled in part: "AN ORDINANCE ELIMINATING THE TWO PERCENT FEE ON GROSS RECEIPTS OF CABLE TELEVISION FRANCHISEES"

ZONING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT: Dave Powell

- I held a Zoning, Planning and Environment committee this evening to brainstorm how the City could become more efficient dealing with zoning and exterior property maintenance issues.

LAWS & CONTRACTS: Katie Eadicicco

I held a Laws and Contracts Committee meeting on December 13 where we discussed tabling the resolution and ordinances regarding the marijuana moratorium indefinitely. We also discussed the updated property maintenance codes.

I'm having another committee meeting on Monday, January 9th at 6:30 PM here in Council Chambers to further discuss the codes and to move forward with an ordinance or resolution to put them in place. We've invited the administration to the committee meeting to get their input as well.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY: Shelly Kroeger

Police Department run count for December, 2022

- Calls for service 941
- Auto Accidents 28
- Booking Original Charges 106
- Total Criminal Charges 139

Citations Issued

- Hamilton County 6
- Arlington Heights 5
- Juvenile 0
- Reading Mayor's 73

Total Citations 85

Fire Departments run count for December 2022

- EMS Responses 212
- Fire Responses 72

Total Responses 284

In the month of December, the police had calls for hit-skip accidents, domestic violence, Overdoses, stolen vehicles (keys left inside), and OVI.

I'm sure it isn't said often enough, but we as a community appreciate everything the Police and fire department does for our city.

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SERVICE: Bob Boehner

Reading Public Works Council Report January 3, 2023

City crew have been out patching potholes in the streets

The mulcher has been out collecting branches.

City crews are done picking up leaves throughout the city

City crews have taken down trees on Maple St and on Market St

City crews replaced several blocks of sidewalk squares on Market St from where tree roots pushed the concrete up across from the city hall

City crew made some improvements at the Police Dept in reference the kitchen area

City crew cleaned up the old incinerator, which was used for storage

City crews started breaking down city trucks to switch over for the winter coming, putting on plows and V- boxes for salting

City repaired two water main breaks one on Lory Lane and the other at Keith Dr

Salt crews were called out over the holiday weekend to salt and clean the streets and using approximately 280 tons of salt for this venture as where the ice below the snow made cleanup more difficult

City crews made the repairs from water main breaks on Lory Ln and Keith Dr and everything is back on track and patched in

RECREATION: Scott Thamann

We have begun taking applications for summer jobs at the community pool, such as concessions workers, front desk employees and lifeguards. Lifeguards do not need to be certified to apply. However, they must have their certification by June 1. Concessions and Front Desk employees need to be at least 14 years of age by June 1, and Lifeguards must be 15 when they take the certification classes. If you have any questions, please call Susan Slavey at City Hall. We will consider all re-hires first, then we will take applications in the order they are received. So, it is important that you get your application in within the next couple of weeks. Unfortunately, we may have to turn down applicants.

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I would also like to schedule a Recreation Committee meeting January 10th @ 5:30 p.m. in the Caucus Room, to discuss an ordinance calling for a raise in pay for our pool employees.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

READING OF RESOLUTIONS:

READING OF ORDINANCES:

(1) AN ORDINANCE ELIMINATING THE TWO PERCENT FEE ON GROSS RECEIPTS OF CABLE TELEVISION FRANCHISEES' FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING ACCESS FOR PUBLIC AND LOCAL ACCESS PROGRAMMING (Second Reading)

Motion made by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mr. Bishop to table this ordinance since it was placed in the Utilities, Lands & Buildings Committee at the last meeting. Motion carried by a 7-0 roll call vote.

(2) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE AUDITOR TO MAKE TRANSFERS NOT TO EXCEED \$2,000,000.00 FROM THE CITY EARNINGS TAX FUND TO THE GENERAL FUND FROM JANUARY 1, 2023 – MARCH 31, 2023, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY (First Reading)

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

ORDINANCE ADOPTED

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2023-01

(3) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE AUDITOR TO MAKE TRANSFERS NOT TO EXCEED \$2,000,000.00 FROM THE CITY EARNINGS TAX FUND TO THE GENERAL FUND FROM APRIL 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2023, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY (First Reading)

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

ORDINANCE ADOPTED

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2023-02

(4) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE AUDITOR TO MAKE TRANSFERS NOT TO EXCEED \$2,000,000.00 FROM THE CITY EARNINGS TAX FUND TO THE GENERAL FUND FROM JULY 1, 2023 – SEPTEMBER 31, 2023, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY (First Reading)

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

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ORDINANCE ADOPTED

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2023-03

(5) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE AUDITOR TO MAKE TRANSFERS NOT TO EXCEED \$2,000,000.00 FROM THE CITY EARNINGS TAX FUND TO THE GENERAL FUND FROM OCTOBER 1, 2023 – DECEMBER 31, 2023, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY *(First Reading)*

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

ORDINANCE ADOPTED

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2023-04

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Boehner moved to adjourn. Mrs. Kroeger seconded. Motion carried by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

X_____

Carla Kacher
Clerk of Council

X_____

Dwight Daum
President of Council