CITY OF READING, OHIO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – REGULAR SESSION
FEBRUARY 04, 2025 – 7:30 PM

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

CALL TO ORDER
President Mr. Mattscheck called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
President Mr. Mattscheck led those in attendance in a prayer and then the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL
Council Members Present: Mr. Powell, Mr. Bonner, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Boehner, Mrs. Kroeger, Mr. Thamann & Mrs. Eadicicco.

OTHER CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:
Mayor Bo Bemmes, Treasurer Brenda Owens, Auditor Sabrina Smith & Clerk of Council Carla Albrinck.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve January 21, 2025 (Regular) Council Minutes Meeting made by Mr. Bronner, seconded by Mrs. Kroeger. Motion carried by voice vote.

AUDIENCE ASKING PARTICIPATION: None

COMMUNICATIONS:

- <u>December 2024 Mayor's Court Monthly Disbursement Report</u>
~ 149 Bench warrants Issued, 306 Cases Heard & $14,285.00 Collected

GUEST SPEAKERS:
LINDA FITZGERALD (Reading Economic Development Director)

<u>COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA (CRA) SUMMARY</u>

The Ohio Community Reinvestment Area program is an economic development tool administered by municipal and county government that provides real property tax exemptions for property owners who renovate existing or construct new buildings. Community Reinvestment Areas are areas of land in which property owners can receive tax incentives for investing in real property improvements. The program is delineated into two distinct categories, those created prior to July 1994 ("pre-1994") and those created after the law changes went into effect after July 1994.

The City's existing CRA (the Reading Road CRA) was created prior to July 1994. Staff is proposing that Council consider adopting a second CRA that would include W. Benson St. and other commercial properties adjoining W. Benson St. (e.g., Jefferson Avenue). Council might also want to consider including residential streets in the "Valley" particularly in areas where there is disinvestment and deteriorated residential structures. The new CRA would of course fall under the post-July 1994 regulations as described below.

For Whom
The Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program is a direct incentive tax exemption program benefiting property owners who renovate existing or construct new buildings. This program permits municipalities or counties to designate

areas where investment has been discouraged as a CRA to encourage revitalization of the existing housing stock and commercial/industrial properties and the development of new residential and commercia/industrial structures.

Benefits
Local municipalities or counties can determine the type of development to be supported by the CRA Program by specifying the eligibility of residential, commercial and/or industrial projects.

CRA Program Benefits

Exemption Levels	Pre-July 1, 1994 CRA	Post-July 1, 1994 CRA
Real Property	Must be 100%	Up to 100%**
Personal Property	None	None
Inventory	None	None

*****The exemption percentage and term for commercial and industrial projects are to be negotiated on a project specific basis. If the proposed exemption exceeds 75%, local school district consent is required unless the legislative authority determines, for each year of the proposed exemption, that at least 50% of the amount of the taxes estimated that would have been charged on the improvements if the exemption had not taken place will be made up by other taxes or payments available to the school district. Upon notice of a project that does not meet this standard, the board of education may approve the project even though the new revenues do not equal at least 50% of the projected taxes prior to the exemption.***

Term Exemptions	Pre-July 1, 1994 CRA	Post-July 1, 1994 CRA
Residential Remodeling (2 units or less; minimum $2500)	Up to 10 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA	Up to 15 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA
Residential Remodeling (more than 2 units; minimum $5000)	Up to 12 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA	Up to 15 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA
Residential New Construction	Up to 15 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA	Up to 15 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA

Commercial and Industrial Remodeling (minimum $5000)	**Up to 12 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA**	**Up to 15 years as negotiated and approved in an CRA Agreement**
Commercial and Industrial New Construction	**Up to 15 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA**	**Up to 15 years as negotiated and approved in an CRA Agreement**

How to apply to establish a CRA

In order to use the Community Reinvestment Area program, a city, village, or county petitions to the Ohio Department of Development for confirmation of a geographical area in which investment in housing has traditionally been discouraged. Once an area is confirmed by the Director of Development, communities may offer real property tax exemptions to taxpayers that invest in that area. (See "Thumbnail Sketch for Creating CRA on next page).

To apply for a CRA tax incentive

Businesses interested in pursuing this incentive should contact the local Community Reinvestment Area Housing Officer in the city, village, or county (in the case of a township location) of the potential investment. Currently the Chief Building Official s is the City's Housing Officer as specified in a resolution.

Pre-1994 CRA Information

Active Community Reinvestment Areas created and operating under pre-1994 legislative authority were established directly by municipalities or counties and did not need the Director of Development's authorization at that time. In these types of CRAs, local jurisdictions do not have the flexibility to restrict the type of projects - residential, commercial or industrial - eligible under the program, nor does it grant local jurisdictions the ability to grant an exemption of less than 100 percent.

Please note that pre-1994 CRA authorizing legislation can only be amended twice after July 1994 and still retain its operation under the old legislation. A third amendment would invoke the new CRA rules, and require the local jurisdiction to petition the Director of Development to confirm the area under the post-1994 rules.

THUMBNAIL SKETCH FOR CREATING COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA

1. Determine the area where you want the CRA to be located. It must have a minimum of two structures within the area, and one must be a residence. (Council needs to decide if the new CRA should include just Benson St. and adjoining commercial properties on side streets, or whether they also want to include residential areas of the Valley).

2. Conduct a housing survey of the area. The area must include specific evidence of disinvestment in the structures located there. For example: houses that are in disrepair (i.e. poor roofing, siding falling off, and porches coming off of the houses). Basically, evidence that the structures have not been kept up. Then, write a narrative about the conditions of the area and photos with addresses of the structures in need of repair.

3. Once the area is determined and the survey is done, the local legislative body must pass its legislation to create the CRA. City or Village Councils can do this within their corporate limits, and County Commissioners must do it for areas in

townships. Keep in mind that if your area wants to offer an exemption for residential projects, the incentive rate and incentive term must be specifically spelled out in the legislation.

4. The enabling legislation must then be published in a newspaper of general circulation once a week for two consecutive weeks per the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code. The entire body of the legislation must be published.

5. After the legislation is passed and published, the CRA Petition for Confirmation must be filled out. A copy is included in your package.

6. Submit the petition and all supporting documentation including municipal and county (if applicable) legislation, map and matching written description, to the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) at the following address: Ohio Development Services Agency Office of Strategic Business Investments, Tax Incentive Section 77 S. High St. PO Box 1001 Columbus, Ohio 43216-1001

7. Once this information has been received by ODSA it will be reviewed for compliance with the legal requirements of the program.

8. Once the requirements have been met, the CRA Confirmation Certificate will be sent to the Director of ODSA for signature.

9. After the Director of ODSA has confirmed the area, then the local jurisdiction can begin offering tax incentives to projects. If you have any additional questions regarding this procedure or the requirements to establish a CRA, please the Office of Strategic Business Investments, Tax Incentives Section at (614) 466- 2317.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

GUEST ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL REPORTS:

MAYOR: Robert "Bo" Bemmes:

- Service Department reported a 19 hour stretch in which there were 6 watermain breaks.
- Please be aware of scam artists as there have been a few residents lately who have been involved in these.

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

LAW DIRECTOR: Dave Stevenson:

DAVID T. STEVENSON
LAW DIRECTOR

City of Reading, Ohio
1000 MARKET STREET
READING, OHIO 45215-3283
Telephone: 513-733-3725
FAX: 513-733-2077

February 4, 2025

Ms. Carla Albrinck
Clerk of Council
City of Reading
1000 Market Street
Reading, Ohio 45215

Re: Annual Report

To the Council of the City of Reading:

The following is the annual report of the activities of my office for the year 2023, as required by Ohio Revised Code section 733.62. All statements, unless otherwise indicated, reflect activities as they appeared at year-end, December 31, 2024.

Monies Received

No funds were received in connection with litigation or collection by this office in 2023.

Mayor's Court

Data regarding prosecutions and fines collected has previously been provided to Council by Mayor Bemmes and Police Chief Edens.

Sex Offenders

I continue to monitor offenders who establish residences within the City in violation of RC 2950.034 which prohibits such offenders from residing with 1000 feet of school premises or day care premises. Most choose to relocate voluntarily when notified that they are in violation.

Other Litigation

The City has an interest as a class member in two class action lawsuits seeking to recover damages from pharmaceutical providers for the opioid epidemic. As a class member, Reading is a passive participant and the lead plaintiffs are handling the litigation. The City is also involved in a lawsuit involving a Cincinnati Police Department investigation in Arlington Heights; Lewis v. City of Cincinnati, et al., Case no. 1:24-cv-519 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio. The City is represented by insurance counsel.

Potential and Threatened Litigation

Nothing to report.

Other

Council, when necessary, will be asked to approve the employment of attorneys who may handle specific matters on an as needed basis. In the past, the following attorneys have handled matters involving Mayor's Court appeals and conflicts of interest, specific legal opinions on individual matters, land appropriations advice, and economic development. The list does not include others who consult directly with the Administration and Civil Service Commission on employment, collective bargaining, and civil service matters.

Daniel Utt
Matt Broo
John Meckstroth
Jim Mecskstroth
Joe Braun

Other issues will be addressed as they arise.

Sincerely yours,

DAVID T. STEVENSON
LAW DIRECTOR

TREASURER: Brenda Owens

City of Reading
January 2025 Income Tax Receipt Summary
With Prior Years Comparison

Individual Residents Income Taxes

	2022	2023	2024	2025	% Change 24 to 25
January	$79,333	$97,988	$140,011	$107,314	-23.4%
February	$37,035	$62,179	$73,859		
March	$131,391	$120,959	$127,546		
April	$457,756	$441,112	$479,159		
May	$102,421	$73,112	$73,028		
June	$107,043	$117,960	$80,804		
July	$28,939	$35,819	$29,749		
August	$36,571	$34,271	$62,099		
September	$78,608	$86,325	$77,164		
October	$63,966	$52,893	$47,668		
November	$64,047	$25,276	$66,383		
December	$46,897	$49,879	$130,517		
Yearly Totals	**$1,234,007**	**$1,197,773**	**$1,387,987**	**$107,314**	
YTD Progress	**$79,333**	**$97,988**	**$140,011**	**$107,314**	**-23.4%**

Payroll Withholding Income Taxes

	2022	2023	2024	2025	% Change 24 to 25
January	$689,143	$699,906	$721,376	$667,033	-7.5%
February	$441,735	$483,701	$495,911		
March	$434,394	$477,447	$561,572		
April	$752,396	$701,491	$733,139		
May	$534,911	$480,917	$502,943		
June	$470,151	$475,836	$585,100		
July	$501,087	$671,451	$561,747		
August	$591,928	$459,951	$547,775		
September	$464,052	$491,289	$546,441		
October	$606,041	$580,966	$575,534		
November	$493,632	$482,419	$539,195		
December	$462,692	$469,943	$605,426		
Yearly Totals	**$6,442,162**	**$6,475,316**	**$6,976,158**	**$667,033**	
YTD Progress	**$689,143**	**$699,906**	**$721,376**	**$667,033**	**-7.5%**

Business Profits Income Taxes

	2022	2023	2024	2025	% Change 24 to 25
January	$48,907	$21,712	$72,579	$95,461	31.5%
February	$24,719	$17,868	$30,745		
March	$210,097	$100,690	$58,593		
April	$274,272	$231,557	$162,557		
May	$42,806	$13,048	$26,006		
June	$399,300	$136,640	$143,130		
July	$15,804	$32,265	$70,851		
August	$22,399	$38,469	$56,349		
September	$337,399	$118,498	$108,430		
October	$22,564	$18,497	$16,253		
November	$15,798	$76,898	$57,636		
December	$48,456	$53,959	$45,256		
Yearly Totals	**$1,462,520**	**$860,101**	**$848,385**	**$95,461**	
YTD Progress	**$48,907**	**$21,712**	**$72,579**	**$95,461**	**31.5%**

Total Income Taxes Collected

	2022	2023	2024	2025	% Change 24 to 25
January	$817,383	$819,606	$933,966	$869,808	-6.9%
February	$503,488	$563,747	$600,514		
March	$775,881	$699,095	$747,711		
April	$1,484,424	$1,374,159	$1,374,855		
May	$680,137	$567,077	$601,977		
June	$976,494	$730,436	$809,034		
July	$545,830	$739,534	$662,347		
August	$650,899	$532,692	$666,223		
September	$880,060	$696,112	$732,034		
October	$692,571	$652,357	$639,455		
November	$573,477	$584,593	$663,214		
December	$558,046	$573,781	$781,199		
Yearly Totals	**$9,138,690**	**$8,533,190**	**$9,212,530**	**$869,808**	
YTD Progress	**$817,383**	**$819,606**	**$933,966**	**$869,808**	**-6.9%**

Total Refunds 2022 $169,800 2023 $666,149 2024 $104,275 2025 Refunds = $9,327

Brenda A. Owens- City Treasurer 02/03/25

AUDITOR: Sabrina Smith:

We have closed January 2025. Please look at the month to date report. It took us one business day to close the month. We do many tasks throughout the month to make this easier. This may not happen every month, but we are happy to report that we were able to close this fast. If you have any questions, please let me know.

We are also working on the GAAP 2024 Statements. There is a long list of items that need to be completed before March 14. The filing will happen in May. The Audit staff needs this time to collect everything for the filing.

City of Reading

Monthly Statement of Cash

As Of: 1/31/2025
Funds: 1101 to 9999 Include Inactive Accounts: No

Fund	Description	Beginning Bal.	MTD Increases	MTD Decreases	Ending Bal.
1101	GENERAL FUND	$3,189,365.76	$245,342.67	$1,120,208.25	$2,314,500.18
1220	CITY EARNINGS TAX	$4,403,952.93	$869,808.09	$197,983.05	$5,075,777.97
1801	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY	$11,621.13	$0.00	$0.00	$11,621.13
1827	SEWER SERVICE FEE	$641,201.78	$47,733.73	$4,773.37	$684,162.14
1835	ACCRUED SICK & VAC PAY	$16,324.46	$0.00	$0.00	$16,324.46
2210	STREET MAINTENANCE	$1,129,254.27	$58,957.14	$204,129.23	$984,082.18
2215	STATE HIGHWAY	$385,343.13	$21,027.51	$102,186.13	$304,184.51
2222	MAYORS COURT COMPUTER	$17,049.74	$2,791.00	$186.90	$19,653.84
2223	DUI ENFORCEMENT	$14,190.17	$155.83	$0.00	$14,346.00
2225	EPA BROWNSFIELD GRANT	$77,818.78	$0.00	$0.00	$77,818.78
2230	Streets & Curbs	$794,802.95	$103,532.96	$119,654.87	$778,681.04
2245	DRUG ENFORCEMENT	$85,343.54	$16.00	$330.00	$85,029.54
2260	MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE	$256,550.34	$8,694.42	$2,500.00	$262,744.76
2265	ALCOHOL EDUCATION	$12,715.28	$0.00	$0.00	$12,715.28
2275	MUNICIPAL ROAD	$11,653.63	$0.00	$0.00	$11,653.63
2401	FEMA	$148,378.96	$0.00	$0.00	$148,378.96
2501	COVID RELIEF FUND	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
3430	GENERAL SINKING	$5,102.95	$0.00	$0.00	$5,102.95
3432	SPECIAL ASSESSMENT	$384.72	$0.00	$0.00	$384.72
4240	STADIUM	$198,447.76	$0.00	$0.00	$198,447.76
4242	FIRE/EMS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	$866,994.63	$38,314.26	$119,683.69	$785,625.20
4243	POLICE & FIRE COMMUNICATIONS	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
4340	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	$782,071.09	$0.00	$0.00	$782,071.09
4341	STADIUM TRACK IMPROVEMENT	$273.85	$0.00	$0.00	$273.85
4343	GROWTH FUND	$144,515.19	$4,773.37	$0.00	$149,288.56
4370	READING ROAD DEV	$494.70	$0.00	$0.00	$494.70
4380	OPWC SCIP	$2,306.02	$0.00	$0.00	$2,306.02
5433	WATER NOTE	$728.23	$0.00	$0.00	$728.23
5605	WATER	$116,367.98	$174,295.23	$189,969.36	$100,693.85
5608	WATER TRUST	$147,666.10	$2,300.00	$1,387.10	$148,579.00
8825	SEWAGE DISP TRUST	$1,567,392.00	$231,981.45	$466,857.39	$1,332,516.06
9999	Payroll Clearing Fund	$26,066.19	$819,457.37	$790,607.16	$54,916.40
Grand Total:		$15,054,378.26	$2,629,181.03	$3,320,456.50	$14,363,102.79

<u>COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:</u>

FINANCE: Andy Bronner

- We had a Finance Committee meeting on January 23rd. In attendance were Councilman Bob Boehner, and Treasurer Brenda Owens. We discussed the feasibility of a list of possible Capital Improvement projects that have been brought up in the past. We agreed that the track at Veterans field is in desperate need of replacement. I spoke with Mayor Bemmes, and he said the administration will look into getting quotes to complete this project.

I would encourage all Council members to give some thought to any projects that they consider a priority for our City. We can then further discuss this topic at a future Council of the Whole meeting.

UTILITIES, LANDS & BUILDINGS: Mark Bishop *(No Report)*

ZONING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT: Dave Powell

My committee met yesterday evening to discuss the creation of a new Community Reinvestment Area. At the end of our discussion we settled on and area roughly bounded by the existing Reading Road CRA on the east, West North Street and Bernard Avenue on the north, the Mill Creek of the west, and our corporation limit on the south.

I have reached out to the Safety Service Director for a map of the existing Reading Road CRA and another CRA from 1981 that is mentioned in our Code of Ordinances so I can prepare a sketch. I will then ask our Safety Service Director to have a consultant prepare a more formal map for attachment to an ordinance. I will continue to work with our Economic Development Consultant on this matter.

LAWS & CONTRACTS: Katie Eadicicco

I held a Laws and Contracts Committee meeting on January 28. We covered a few items that we would like to work on this year.

The first topic we discussed is the moratorium on retail marijuana sales and dispensaries. We discussed the possible tax revenue for the city should we overturn the moratorium. However, my committee would like the Zoning, Planning and Environment committee to look at restrictions on where a dispensary may be located, and if that's even possible to do so.

That said, there is some concern about how the tax revenue is distributed. As of right now, there is proposed Senate Bill 56 which could possibly take away the tax revenue from the host cities and direct it towards the State's General Fund. As of right now, the state gets 10% of the tax and the host city gets 36% of that 10%. As of January 25, the total recreational marijuana sales were $292,874,669 (two million eight hundred and seventy-four thousand six hundred and sixty nine dollars). I'd like to keep an eye on the Senate Bill to see what happens there before we move forward.

Secondly, we discussed revisiting the rental property ordinance from 2021 and what, if anything, the city could do to limit venture capital firms and LLCs from buying up housing stock within the city. I'm going to schedule a meeting with our county auditor, Jessica Miranda, and discuss this with her to see what we could possibly do.

And lastly, we reviewed the council rules and at the request of the President of Council discussed adding a section regarding possible meeting cancelations and the best process to do so, if needed and the best way to announce a cancelation to the public. I'm working on this and will update the rules and distribute them to council to review here soon.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY: Shelly Kroeger

Police Department run count for January 2025

Calls for service	1209
Auto Accidents	35
Booking Original Charges	100
Total Criminal Charges	136

Citations Issued

Hamilton County	3
Arlington Heights	38
Juvenile	1
Reading Mayor's	195
Total Citations	**239**

Fire Departments run count for January 2025

EMS Responses	204
Fire Responses	65
Total Responses	**269**

For the month of January, the police department had calls for theft, forgery, identity theft, OVI, disorderly conduct, overdoses, assault and stolen packages. Cars are still being broken into also. Please do not leave anything of value in your car. If you aren't home during the day and you know you have a package coming, consider having that package sent to your place of employment if possible or to a family member's house. More and more packages are being stolen.

SERVICE: Bob Boehner

Reading Public Works Council Report February 4,2025

City crews have been out patching potholes in the streets

City crews repaired the fencing next to 23 Pike St and are now tearing the structure down

City crews helped in flashing of the Fire Departments new training facility

All city vehicles needed for the winter have been switched over for the coming events

City crews used approximately 800 ton of salt in the last two snow encounters over this past weekend

City crews have repaired (4) water main breaks on Alwil Dr, and water main breaks on Carol Dr ,Bernard Ave, Trillium Ct, and Jefferson & Southern Ave

City crews made storm and conduit repairs at Reading & Benson St

City crew installed a new water line at the Fire house to fill their Fire Trucks

City crew repair the furnace at the Haffey Field House

City crews have been working on remodeling the Safety Service Director office

City crews have removed the Christmas Decorations throughout the City

RECREATION: Scott Thamann

- In regards to the new filtration system for the pool, Charlie Schneider from Brandstetter Carroll assures me that we will have the plans by the end of the month.
- Yesterday, I met with Joe Morganroth, a landscape designer for Stephen A. Smith Associates, to discuss the construction of a dog park at the north end of Riesenberg Ave. I expect to have those plans within the week.
- Last week, I also met with Grant Greiwe from DWA Recreation to discuss options for playground equipment at three of our parks: Flege, Cherryfield, and Hilltop. I hope to have an ordinance for council at our next meeting for the purchase of these sets to replace aging equipment.
- Finally, we are still accepting applications for positions at the community pool this summer. You can get your application at city hall.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Historical Society puts on events at the library:

- Feb 11 event is about the cleaning up of the bomb factory.
- March 11 event is about Peter Bronson's, "How the Midwest Was Won."

<u>LEGISLATIVE SESSION</u>

READING OF RESOLUTIONS: NONE

READING OF ORDINANCES: NONE

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS: NONE

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Boehner moved to adjourn. Mrs. Kroeger seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

X______________________________________ X______________________________________

Carla Albrinck
Clerk of Council

Kevin Mattscheck
President of Council