**CommUNITY Team**

February 5, 2025

Berlin City Hall

Present: Bobbie Erdmann, Marie Reilly, Matthew Stepniewski, Sue Kiener, Chris Kalupa, Jessi Balcom, Allison Gohlke, Sue Trampf

**#1 The CommUNITY Team meeting was called to order at 10:04AM by Sue Kiener.**

**#2 & #3 - Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**

Motion to approve the agenda: Erdmann 1st, Kalupa 2nd, motion approved through a voice vote.

Motion to approve the November 6, 2024 minutes: Erdmann 1st, Trampf 2nd, motion approved through a voice vote.

**#4 - Discussion and updates from civic groups, organizations, city departments, etc.**

Berlin City Administrator, Jessi Balcom updated the group on City happenings: Attorney Matt Chier, after 27 years, will be stepping down and at the Feb 11th Common Council meeting a new City Attorney will be appointed. A Compensation/wage study and Strategic Plan are in the works.

Trampf updated on the ABC Group – they are a non-profit, all volunteer group that organizes free community events such as Holiday Parade, Lighting of the Park, and Let Freedom Ring the Independence Day celebration.
Lions Club does a Rose Sale (sold Mother’s Day weekend), they just finished the Cheese Box Sale and the Coupon Books sold out. They also do a Vision screening at schools, help with the B&G Club backpack project, and a Diabetes Health Day.

Kiener (City) spoke briefly on the retirement of Fire Chief Paugels after 45 years of service, and Gary Podoll after 40 years of service.

Gohlke (Berlin Schools) announced that a new website will be rolled out in March, a new newsletter platform (all digital), the hiring of lifeguards for the indoor pool, the 25-26 academic calendar is out, and reminded us that the school facilities are available to use. The Berlin Community & Recreation is working to revive the School Forests.

Erdmann said the Historical Society is on a hiatus now, and she is doing research on buildings in town. There is a meetng next week.

Stepniewski (Farmers & Merchants Bank) spoke about the grants and opportunities for small businesses and low to moderate income that they offer. More programs opening up soon with great response from the community, and programs for developers coming soon.

Kalupa (Berlin Library) spoke on the new meeting room they now have that is available to the public, the Digitization event coming up for people to change VHS over to digital on 2/17, sign up now, the Quilt show on 3/10-3/21 with applications now being accepted, the reading challenge through the end of February, the Valentines for Vets project that was just completed, an author event this Saturday at 10AM, public display cases and wall area for use, and today she is attending the Ripon Faces of Rural Homelessness awareness event.

Reilly (BCDC) talked about the 2 new businesses will be opening soon in town – a sporting goods store with live bait, and a Mexican grocery store, and that ElCharro’s does profit sharing for groups, she has a few businesses that are looking for a place to rent with a commercial kitchen which is difficult to find, she thanked Erdmann for the help she has been giving on the history of building in town, and Matt has been a great resource for helping get buildings sold, Fungi Fusion is getting close to opening and Rivershore Church has a free meal on Wednesday evening, she would like to see an ordinance to prevent storage in storefronts, and there will be 2 ribbon cuttings soon – 1 for Berlin Oil and 1 for Triangle restaurant.

**#5 CommUNITY Team direction, leadership & future**

Kiener read an email from Ashley Bartol on the future of the Team. Discussion on where the Team is going, and what can be done to get better attendance. Reilly will contact the paper to see if they will work with the Team on raising more awareness.

**#6 & #7 – Old & New business**

None.

**#8 Next Meeting date/location**

March 5th at the Berlin Library. Kalupa will be doing the agenda and minutes.

**#9 Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Erdmann 1st, Trampf 2nd, motion approved through a voice vote.