

SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL MEETING AMENDED MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 28, 2025 AT 5:30PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BERLIN CITY HALL, 2ND FLOOR
MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC & CITY HALL IS HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE
CITY MEETINGS CAN BE WATCHED LIVE OR RECORDED
ON THE CITY OF BERLIN YOUTUBE PAGE @CITYOFBERLIN5623

1. Call to order by Mayor Burgess at 5:30 pm. Roll call: Alderpersons Przybyl, Boeck, Nigbor, Hill, Stobbe, and Sorenson present. Also present: Eric Larson of Municipal Law and Litigation group, city attorney; Jessi Balcom, City Administrator; Debra Thiel, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer; Scott Zabel, Street Superintendent; Rebecca Bays, Parks and Recreation Director
2. Seat Virtual Attendees (if necessary) – None
3. General Public Comments.
 - Michelle Cassidy of 181 E. Noyes St., spoke in favor of the pool; The pool is the heart of Berlin.
 - Vanessa Elendt of 449 Van Horn Rd., spoke in favor of the pool; The pool gives people reasons to stay.
 - Eric Berndt of 192 Spring St., spoke about businesses wanting to donate to the pool.
 - Nancy Gimenez of 179 E Liberty St. read a letter from Nicole Thorsen of UT, formerly of Berlin, in favor of the pool; The pool is a large part of why they continue to vacation here.
 - Josh Wendt of 164 E. Waushara St., spoke in favor of the pool; If it closes, it will remain closed.
 - Jack Nation of 428 River Dr., spoke in favor of the pool; It keeps children active.
 - Barb Resop of 163 Eastridge Dr. #9, spoke of a time when the pool had a profit and suggested setting up a pool committee.
 - Bobbie Erdmann of 480 Hillside Dr., commented that the pool was never expected to make money, and encouraged the Council to make a commitment to the pool.
 - Tammy Goettl of 2257 Wall St., spoke in favor of the pool; It is a community hub. She referenced community support of the pool.
 - Madyson Main of 133 N. Wisconsin St., read a letter on behalf of the Boys and Girls Club of the Tri County Area in favor of the pool.
 - Erica Berkshire of 330 N. Wisconsin St., spoke on behalf of Friends of Berlin Aquatic Center, of community support and donations in favor of the pool. She also read a letter from the Sass family, owners of Wisconsin Spice, in support of the pool with monetary support. The Sass family would like a decision by August 31.
 - Tom Yancy of 159 S. Swetting St., spoke in support of the pool; It is vital to the community and his family.
 - Ammanda Garza of 148 S. Kossuth St., suggested that a change in pool operation be made; Run it like a business; Create a board.
 - Abigail Giffey of 445 Sacramento St., suggested the city donate the pool to a 501 (c)(3).
 - Dave Hitz of 310 Greely St., spoke in favor of the pool; It gives an alternative to crime.
 - Maddie Hitz of 310 Greely St., spoke in favor of the pool; It's a special place that

makes Berlin who we are.

4. Discussion of the future of the Berlin Aquatic Center:

- a. Structural condition of the pool- *City Administrator, Jessi Balcom, handed out pool attendance records from 2016-2024 and financial information for 2024 and 2025. She discussed the structural condition of the pool; She explained that the \$2 million estimate completed by Ramaker in 2024 brings the pool back to its original operational status and does not include funds to bring the facility into ADA compliance or provide for amenity upgrades. Alderperson Hill added that the estimate does include designing a new electric room and disconnecting the electric from the plumbing as they are currently cohabitating. It would also include a dressing room upgrade.*
- b. Operational deficit of the pool- *City Administrator, Jessi Balcom, explained that the pool operates at approximately a \$100-\$120 thousand deficit annually. She explained that structural and operational concerns are two separate concerns.*
- c. Options for funding structural repairs and project timeline
 - a. City Borrowing- *City Administrator Balcom discussed the total borrowing capacity is limited by state statute. The City also has a financial policy limiting borrowing, although the Common Council can revise the policy. She also discussed the City's creation of a Capital Improvement Plan, which identifies the costs of maintaining all current assets. She discussed the approximate costs and current completion rates of street repair. Point of Order was raised by Alderperson Hill. Discussion was had to temporarily seat the president while the Mayor stepped out. Alderperson Boeck made a motion to seat Victoria Hill, with a second by Alderperson Sorenson. Voice vote carried. City Administrator Balcom continued to discuss the creation of the Capital Improvement Plan. Discussion about the City's ability to borrow compared to the City's ability to afford repayment. Discussion about borrowing raising the levy and increasing the tax rate. Discussion about the Strategic Plan Survey results; The survey will be closed on August 1, and results will be discussed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. City Administrator Balcom discussed the total borrowing needs to include all community needs the Council deems necessary. Point of Order was raised by Alderperson Hill. Alderperson Hill made a motion to reseal the Mayor, with a second by Alderperson Boeck. Voice vote carried.*
 - i. Community Donations- *City Administrator Balcom suggested the Council determine the total amount needed and the time frame for donations to be realized.*
 - ii. Combination of Borrowing and Donations- *City Administrator Balcom suggested the Council determine a time frame, the amount needed, and the City move forward only if the funds are raised.*
 - iii. Unfunded – close pool- *City administrator Balcom discussed that closing the pool could mean closing the pool and demolishing, or no longer owning as far as selling or donation.*
 - iv. Unfunded – sell or donate pool. *City Administrator Balcom discussed that the City's Code of Ordinances outlines the process of the City disposing of surplus property, and the Council could amend the ordinance if needed. Mayor Burgess suggested that more businesses may consider a donation to the pool if it was a 501(c)(3). Discussion about donating the pool to the*

Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center volunteers. Erica Berkshire of Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center, discussed needing time to restructure the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center board to be ready to take over the pool. She added that a temporary pool closure would allow the time to restructure to make the pool successful. Mayor Burgess discussed the decisions the Council will need to make after the audit is completed, and that a decision to borrow for pool repairs should be made by referendum. Alderperson Stobbe suggested the closing of the pool for 2026, and the Friends of The Berlin Aquatic Center develop a commitment and plan to run the pool, and move to a referendum if needed. Mayor Burgess suggested that the Council agree to close the pool for 2026. Alderperson Boeck asked Scott Zabel, City of Berlin Street Superintendent, what the effects of shutting the pool down for a year would be. Zabel confirmed that a year shut down wouldn't be much different than 2020, however a longer shut down would be more difficult. Alderperson Hill suggested that a common message from the Council to the community about the future of the pool be made. Mayor Burgess asked Eric Larson of Municipal Law and Litigation group, city attorney, if any city ordinances would need to be adjusted to give the pool to a non-profit group. Larson discussed that non-profit would need to be properly created, and researched, including title work, would need to be done to ensure that the property can be donated. Discussion about a referendum and budget timeline. Berkshire discussed the difficulties the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center has had getting donations without a commitment from the City. Ammanda Garza of the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center, discussed how the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center mission has changed as the needs of the pool has changed. Alderperson Hill presented an option of the City maintaining the pool, but another group running the pool. Larsen confirmed that a rental agreement would need to be made. He discussed that state regulations would need to be met regardless of who owns the pool. Mayor Burgess discussed the City cannot afford to open the pool next year, and the Council has the intention to gift the pool to the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center. The council discussed that a letter of intent to accept the donation of the pool from the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center would be needed in September. City Administrator Balcom agreed to add a presentation by the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center to the September agenda.

- d. *Creation and Posting of Senior Center and Aquatic Center Manager Position- City Administrator Balcom asked if anyone wanted to comment. Alderperson Stobbe discussed that since the Council is looking to donate the pool, there is no reason to discuss.*

5. General Public Comments.

- *Dennis Molder of 219 S. Grove St., questioned if the operational funds were available, could the pool be run again. Mayor Burgess confirmed the pool could run again in 2026, but a filter failure would cost approximately \$200 thousand. He suggested proper management from another group.*
- *Brian Brock of W722 Cty Rd. X, spoke in support of donation of the pool to a non-profit, but would like to see the City help the non-profit with the water.*

- *Michelle Cassidy of 181 E. Noyes St., members of the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic Center questioned where the current tax money that goes to the pool will go after the donation of the pool and if that money can still go to the pool.*
- *Tom Yancy of 159 S. Swetting St., questioned if the needed pool repairs could happen off season, if the current pledges for repair could be used for operation, and if other groups would be willing to work with the Friends of The Berlin Aquatic Center rather than compete.*
- *Vanessa Elendt of 449 Van Horn Rd., questioned getting a second pool estimate, working with the community and willing businesses. Mayor Burgess confirmed that it was discussed to source work locally. Zabel confirmed that they would rather use local contractors rather than what was quoted.*
- *Josh Wendt of 164 E. Waushara St., questioned what would happen to the pool if the 501(c)(3) would dissolve.*
- *Alderperson Hill commented that the Friends of the Berlin Aquatic center started as a fundraising effort, and are now being asked a much bigger task; They are being asked to take over management.*

6. Old Business - *None*

7. New Business - *None*

8. Adjourn. *Alderperson Stobbe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 pm with a second by Przybyl. Voice vote carried.*

Respectfully submitted by
Brittani Majeskie, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer