

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 7, 2025 7:00PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BERLIN CITY HALL, 2ND FLOOR

1. Call to order/Roll Call- *Mayor Burgess called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Alderpersons Boeck, Hill, Nigbor, Przybyl, Sorenson, and Stobbe were present. Staff also present were City Administrator, Jessi Balcom; Deputy-Clerk Treasurer, Brittani Majeskie; Street Superintendent, Scott Zabel; Berlin Police Chief, Brian Pulvermacher; EMS Director, Evan VandenLangenberg.*
2. Seat Virtual Attendees (if necessary) - *None*
3. General Public Comments. – *Daniel Hoppa of 235 S. Wisconsin St., spoke to ask the council to consider the official abandonment of portions of River St. and Wisconsin St. Hoppa reviewed various maps of the area and properties. City Administrator Balcom will send this concern to the Plan Commission.*
4. Approval of Minutes. RECOMMENDATION: Approve the minutes from the September 2, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting. *Aldersperson Przybyl made a motion to approve the September 2, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes, with a second by Aldersperson Sorenson. Voice vote carried.*
5. Introduction of Interim Lakeside Municipal Court Judge Troy Damsteegt. RECOMMENDATION: Listen to presentation. *Lakeside Municipal Court Judge Troy Damsteegt introduced himself to the Council. Damsteegt was appointed by the Lakeside Municipal Court Executive Committee on August 1, 2025. Damsteegt has many previous years of experience in law enforcement. Damsteegt explained Lakeside Municipal Court serves 23 communities across 3 counties, holding court in 5 locations throughout that jurisdiction. The main office and clerk are in North Fond du Lac. Lakeside Municipal court handles traffic, municipal ordinance, fire, and building code violation cases as well as marriages.*
6. Discussion of Uniform Deposit Schedule. RECOMMENDATION: Review the Police Chief's recommended updates to the Uniform Deposit Schedule (list of the fees and bonds for all municipal citations.) Discussion and action as appropriate. *Berlin Police Chief, Brian Pulvermacher, presented recommendations to modify the existing Uniform Deposit Schedule. Pulvermacher confirmed that traffic fines are set by the State, and those fines cannot be raised. He confirmed that the deposit portion received by the County and the City may be the same, but the fees to the offender are less because Lakeside Municipal Court costs are less than Circuit Court costs. Pulvermacher confirmed the City can raise fines on City Ordinances. Discussion on potential increased revenue with increases to the Uniform Deposit Schedule. Pulvermacher confirmed that despite the police officers being active in the community, many of the Municipal Ordinance Violations aren't written because they are rare, especially second or third offenses due to subsequent offenses spanning a calendar year. Pulvermacher noted that increased deposit amounts that cause increased citation amounts will likely increase legal fees as offenders may feel more of a need to contest a higher citation rather than pay a lower citation. Pulvermacher cautioned against a blanket increase to the deposit fees and suggested setting fees to be similar to surrounding communities. A motion to recommend updates to the Uniform Deposit Schedule as suggested by Chief Pulvermacher to the Common Council was made by Aldersperson Stobbe with a second by Aldersperson Nigbor. Voice vote carried.*
7. Resolution #25-10 Designating Waushara County as the Collecting Official for the Issuance of Dog Licenses for the City of Berlin or Waushara County Residents. RECOMMENDATION: Review and recommend adoption of Resolution #25-10 Designating Waushara County as the Collecting Official for the Issuance of Dog Licenses for the City of Berlin or Waushara County Residents. *City Administrator Balcom updated the Council that Waushara County is updating their tax recording system to the same system as Green Lake County. This change will also*

include Waushara County issuing dog licenses and accepting the associated fees. Discussion that this change would affect Ward 1 residents. Alderperson Stobbe made a motion to recommend to Common Council the adoption of Resolution #25-10 Designating Waushara County as the Collecting Official for the Issuance of Dog Licenses for the City of Berlin, Waushara County Residents with a second by Alderperson Przybyl. Voice vote carried.

8. Resolution #25-11 Intention to Join the Statewide Public Safety Interoperable Communication System For the City of Berlin. RECOMMENDATION: Review and recommend adoption of Resolution #25-11 Intention to Join the Statewide Public Safety Interoperable Communication System For the City of Berlin to allow Berlin EMS to apply for an EMS Radio grant. *EMS Director, Evan VandenLangenberg, updated the Council that the State of Wisconsin is updating the radio system to 700/800MHz and Berlin EMS is running on VHF which is a much lower band, in the 150MHz range. The State has made 80/20 grants available for upgrades to radio systems. Upgrades would cost approximately \$50,000, with Berlin EMS costs of approximately \$10,000. VandenLangenberg confirmed that this update would allow increased communication across more departments. Alderperson Stobbe made a motion to recommend to Common Council the adoption of Resolution #25-11 Intention to Join the Statewide Public Safety Interoperable Communication System for the City of Berlin to allow Berlin EMS to apply for an EMS Radio grant, with a second by Alderperson Hill. Voice vote carried.*
9. Budget preparation discussion. RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff regarding general budget preparation and Capital project annual borrowing, employee wage increases, implementation of a recycling fee and short-term borrowing. *City Administrator Balcom updated the council on the City of Berlin budget timeline; The budget must be noted for public hearing in the paper as a Class 1 notice at least 15 days prior, therefore the budget needs to be completed by October 17th to allow notice to be published in the October 23rd paper. The public hearing will be scheduled for November 11th at 6:30pm. City Administrator noted that to complete the budget, a few more items need to be decided; The Council needs to decide the Capital Project annual borrowing, which will affect this year's borrowing; The council needs to determine what the employee wage increase should be. Balcom explained that employees will see decreases in their overall take home pay due to changes in the WRS contributions for next year and the increase in healthcare premium contributions; The Council also needs to consider the implementation of the recycling fee. However, data from Waste Management isn't complete which would delay the completion of the budget. Therefore, City Administrator Balcom suggested moving forward with changes to the Municipal Ordinance and Fee Schedule in order to be ready to make this change for 2027, and note for this year recycling is part of the levy and short-term borrowing. City Administrator suggested that these decisions will impact the total amount of short-term borrowing needed, and would be noted specifically on the public hearing notice. Discussion on short-term borrowing and potentially pulling additional projects from the CIP to add to the total borrowing amount. Adam Ruechel of BAIRD, confirmed that short-term borrowing is estimated at approximately \$98,000 with an additional borrowing to cover recycling costs. Discussion about long-term borrowing of \$2 million every-other year allowing planning over two years and savings on interest and costs of issuance. Discussion on employee wages. City Administrator Balcom suggested that the council not officially adopt the Wage Study as presented as it may be difficult for the City to fund. Balcom stated she values the study as it compares wages against similar communities and within the City, which considers external and internal equity that will be helpful when hiring. Evan VandenLangenberg confirmed the EMS budget approved a 3% wage increase. Council members discussed wanting City employee positions, wages, and years of service, not names, listed on the pay scales for the Common Council meeting on 10/14/25, with a closed session discussion regarding specific employees to follow. Discussion on a 3% wage increase to keep employee morale and maintain employee retention. Discussion on long-term capital borrowing. The Council verified long-term borrowing of \$2 million every other year. Mayor Burgess asked for visuals on the average homeowner impact to be prepared. Adam Ruechel estimated that every \$100,000 in borrowing comes to roughly a 3 cent mill rate increase and \$5 tax increase, dependent on how much a home is worth. City Administrator Balcom gave*

an update on the status of the recycling fee. Waste Management is still working on a geo-location audit and doesn't anticipate the audit to be completed before the budget needs to be finalized. Balcom suggested that recycling remain on the levy and to move forward with ordinance and fee schedule updates. Discussion to not move the recycling fee to a special fee unless the recycling fee can be charged accurately. Discussion on the approximate short-term borrowing amount. City Administrator Balcom approximates the short-term borrowing amount to be about \$300,000.

10. Review Wage and Compensation Study. RECOMMENDATION: Discussion and action as appropriate. *The Council will review this at the meeting 10/14/25.*
11. Capital Improvement Plan discussion. RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff regarding the projects to be included, amended or removed from the draft CIP (including, but not limited to, the Berlin Aquatic Center) and determine the planned annual borrowing for Capital projects. Review and recommend adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan. *Discussion on adding The Berlin Aquatic Center to the CIP. Alderperson Hill suggested adding the pool to the CIP with 3 to 5 years of borrowing, with consideration of about half of the funds being donated by the community, and the other half, equaling \$1.5 to 2 million, through borrowing. Discussion that the CIP is a wish list of projects to be funded, and the CIP can be updated annually. Adam Ruechel discussed options for adding the pool to the CIP and suggested adding it to the CIP as a one page addition which could be inserted in the budget of a future year, if appropriate. City Administrator will add the pool to the CIP for the next meeting on 10/14/25. Discussion on the amount to use as the previous quote is becoming outdated, and less reliable.*
12. Amend Ordinance Chapter 54 Solid Waste and Recycling. RECOMMENDATION: Discussion and action as appropriate. *City Administrator Balcom explained that the current ordinances need to be updated to show a special charge for recycling. City Administrator received Council direction to have the attorney amend the ordinance and bring a final ordinance back to the Council.*
13. Amend Fee Schedule to reflect implementation of Recycling Fee and 2026 updates. RECOMMENDATION: Discussion and action as appropriate. *Discussion to take the recycling fee for 2026 off the fee schedule and note that it will be implemented in 2027. A motion was made by Alderperson Stobbe to recommend to Common Council the amended fee schedule for 2026 with the noted update to the recycling fee for 2027, with a second by Przybyl. Voice vote carried.*
14. 2025 Emergency Medical and Ambulance Service Contract with the Town of Aurora. RECOMMENDATION: Discussion and action as appropriate. *City Administrator Balcom explained that in 2023 there was an EMS contract with the Town of Aurora. The City is requesting the Town of Aurora pay for EMS services in 2024 and 2025. Evan VandenLangenberg, EMS Director, confirmed that costs are impacted by response time. Discussion to update the contract draft to include 24 hour coverage and change the year from 2024 to 2025. Alderperson Hill made a motion to recommend to Common Council approval of the Emergency Medical and Ambulance Service Contract with the Town of Aurora for 2025 with the amendments as indicated, with a second by Alderperson Nigbor. Voice vote carried.*
15. Motion to convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. 19.85 (1) (e) Deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session. (Purchase of 169 Ripon Road). *Alderperson Przybyl made a motion to convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. 19.85 (1) (e) Deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session. (Purchase of 169 Ripon Road), with a second by Alderperson Hill. Voice vote carried.*

Closed session commenced at 8:15PM.

16. Reconvene into open session and take appropriate action as a result of closed session discussion. *Alderson Hill made a motion to reconvene into open session with a second by Alderson Stobbe at 8:29PM. Voice vote carried.*
17. Adjourn. *Alderson Hill made a motion to adjourn with a second by Alderson Sorenson. Voice vote carried. Meeting Adjourned at 8:30PM.*

Respectfully submitted by
Brittani Majeskie, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer