

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 3, 2026 7:00PM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BERLIN CITY HALL, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR

MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND IS HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE

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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 present were City Administrator, Jessi Balcom; Street Superintendent, Scott Zabel; Fire Chief, Doug Dewhurst; Senior Center and Recreation Facilities Director, Susan Kiener; Assistant Police Chief, Noah Knetzger.*
2. Seat Virtual Attendees (if necessary) – *None.*
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. General Public Comments. – *None.*
5. Approval of Minutes. – *Aldersperson Przybyl made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting and the Closed Session minutes from the February 3, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting, with a second by Aldersperson Stobbe. Voice vote carried.*
6. Discussion of Boathouse in South Adams Avenue Right-of-Way. *Administrator Balcom noted that the owner of the Boathouse has inquired as to the process to sell the structure and “lease” (the land is not “leased”, there is an active right-off-way permit) the property from the City. It was explained that the Boathouse in the South Adams Avenue Right-of-Way had been discussed by the Common Council in 2013-2014. At that time no formal motion was made by the Council. It appears that the plan moving forward at that time was to have the boathouse structure owner apply and pay for a right-of-way permit quarterly, provide a signed Indemnification, Defense, and Hold Harmless Agreement, and provide insurance. At some point the application and payment was changed to annually, no explanation as to why was found. The current permit is through 9.28.2026. State Statute notes that the structure can be ordered removed within 10 days and the structure owner has no right to use of the right-of-way/permit.*

*Council discussed potential options and questions. It was noted that should the Council choose to continue with the annual permit, a different format maybe recommended by the City Attorney. It was noted that the Council could determine that the current arrangement is with the current owner and would not be offered/extended if the structure is sold. It was noted that the current structure owner has fulfilled all of the requirements/obligations asked of them by the City to this point, and the structure has been in the same place for many years. It was noted that this is not a precedent that the Council would wish to have that people could utilize the right-of-way continuously for their own private purposes.*

*The structure owner, Brian Brock, joined the meeting via phone at 7:18PM. When asked if the structure is movable, Mr. Brock noted that the structure is not on a concrete slab and it has a support system underneath. Mr. Brock provided ownership history of the structure. It is unknown when the structure was built and whether or not permission was obtained to build the structure at that time.*

*The Council noted if the structure’s owner would like to reapply for the right-of-way permit, the request will require annual Council review and determination (granting of the permit is not guaranteed), and the permit will not be automatically renewed. If the owner wishes to sell the structure, the right-of-way permit will not be transferred to the new owner. The prospective*

*owner will need to come to the Council prior to purchase for them to determine whether or not the permit will be granted. If the permit is not granted or renewed, the structure will need to be removed from the right-of-way within 10 days. The structure's owner should plan to come before the Council in August or September for review of the permit/application, or prior to the sale of the structure.*

7. *Police and Fire Department Annual Reports. Assistant Police Chief Knetzger and Fire Chief Dewhurst presented their annual department reports to the Common Council.*
8. *Discuss First Floor Office Remodel – half wall. Discussion noted that the cost is not anticipated to be more than \$1500, and will be split with the Utilities. The Department of Public Works will be doing the work, some inconvenience is anticipated for staff during the actual construction. Alderperson Hill made a motion to recommend to the Common Council the approval of the first floor office remodel – half wall, with a second by Alderperson Stobbe. Voice vote carried.*
9. *Review proposed Capital borrowing plan for 2026-2027. City Administrator Balcom noted that the Council previously determined that the Capital Borrowing plan should entail the borrowing on \$2M every other year to address the capital needs of the City. The proposed plan lists all of the items noted in years 2026-2031 of the CIP as well as a few items that have more recently been added to the list. The total amount of funding anticipated to be available for capital needs through future borrowings will be impacted by the Hwy 91 project in 2029 (anticipated to utilize approximately \$1M of the \$2M to be borrowed for 2028-2029) and the Hwy 49 project in 2030 (anticipated to utilize all of the \$2M to be borrowed). Due to the road projects approximately \$3M of the \$6M to be borrowed between now and 2031, only \$3M will be available for other capital projects/needs. The Council will need to keep this in mind when prioritizing projects/equipment needs over the next 6 years.*

*Some projects are of an immediate or required need. The Fire Engine will need to be borrowed for this year as it has been ordered and is currently being built. The Fire Department's rescue vehicle is a repurposed ambulance from 1989 that has reached its end of useful life. It was noted that Swetting Street should be looked at in relation to the E Park Ave road project. The Parks and Recreation department is requesting funding to move forward with software that will allow for online application/management/rental of park facilities, including the campground.*

*A motion was made by Alderperson Stobbe to recommend to the Common Council the approval of the Proposed 2026-2027 Capital Borrowing priority list for the upcoming \$2M capital borrowing, with a second by Alderperson Hill. Voice vote carried.*

10. *Waste Management Grant Funds. Motion made by Alderperson Hill to recommend to the Common Council the approval of the \$1000 donation from Waste Management for the years 2025 and 2026 be used to purchase a new water supply tower for the campground, with a second by Alderperson Stobbe. Voice vote carried.*
11. *Review revisions to Employee Handbook. City Administrator Balcom highlighted the proposed changes to the Employee Handbook. Changes to the rules regarding relatives working in the same department, it has been clarified that an exception can be made for those on separate EMS crews. The proposal for residency was to change to a 30 minute response time, after discussion the Council advised that a 25 mile residency requirement would be preferable. It was noted that the Council instituted a 50 mile residency requirement for the Police Department a couple of years ago. Discussion regarding on-call employees and departments that are staffed on shift 24/7. Clarification to the requirement to notify the City of driving privilege changes. It was proposed that new hires would start with 2 weeks of vacation available to them, and then if used prior to having accrued it, it would be paid back to the City. The Council advised that there was to be no upfront vacation, but employees could accrue vacation at the two weeks per year rate upon hire. It was suggested that the vacation accrual schedule be updated to allow accrual of 3*

*weeks at 6 years and 4 weeks of vacation at 13 years of service. Eight hours of personal time was to be added to EMS to allow for one full shift (24 hours) of personal time per year. Bereavement and holiday pay eligibility for fulltime employees will no longer require 90 days of employment. FMLA policy updated to require use of paid leave.*

12. *Wisconsin Assessment Monies Contractor Services Grant Awarded. City Administrator Balcom noted the Phase 1 assessment has begun.*
13. *Discussion of Senior Center Assistant Cook Position. Council expressed concern regarding the need, funding and available training time for the proposed position. Alderperson Hill made a motion to recommend to the Common Council approval of the hiring of a Senior Center Assistant Cook. Motion died due to lack of a second. The Mayor asked that the item be brought back for further discussion at a future meeting.*
14. *Discussion of City Website ADA Compliance Requirements. City Administrator Balcom noted that City will be required to bring the City's website into compliance with new rules on the accessibility of web content and mobile apps provided by State and Local Government by April 26, 2027. Motion by Alderperson Stobbe to direct staff to work with the website host to move forward with a plan and implementation to bring the City's website into ADA compliance, with a second by Alderperson Przybyl. Voice vote carried.*
15. *League of Wisconsin Spring Exchange. City Administrator Balcom noted that the conference costs are covered by the League due to the City's membership.*
16. *Adjourn. Motion by Alderperson Sorenson to adjourn at 9:15PM, with a second by Alderperson Stobbe. Voice vote carried.*

*Respectfully submitted by  
Jessi Balcom, City Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer*