

COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JULY 14, 2026 AT 7PM

1. Call to order/Roll Call – *Mayor Burgess called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Alderpersons Cauley, Hill, Klawitter, Przybyl, and Stobbe were present. Alderperson Sorenson was excused. Staff present were Jessi Balcom, City Administrator; Brittani Majeskie, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer; Scott Zabel, Street Superintendent; Susan Kiener, Berlin Senior Center & Recreation Facilities Director; and Tim Ludolph, Planning and Development Director. Also present was Daivd Minch, Government Audit Shareholder of KerberRose.*
2. Seat Virtual Attendees – *None.*
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. General Public Comments – *None.*

CONSENT AGENDA: The Consent Agenda contains items which staff considers to be routine and have already been discussed and recommended by a committee, board or commission at a previous meeting. Staff recommends that Council act on all of these items on a single roll call vote. If any member of Council wishes to have any item removed from the Consent Agenda and discussed, the Council member may request that item be removed from the Consent Agenda prior to the adoption.

5. Waive the reading of ordinances and resolutions.
6. Accept and place on file reports from the City Clerk, Treasurer (May Bank Statements and Reconciliations), and Building Inspector.
7. Approve payment of bills.
8. Approve minutes from the 6.9.2026 Common Council Meeting, 6.9.2026 Special Common Council Meeting, and 6.9.2026 Closed Session minutes.
9. Approve the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole to approve the renewal of League of Wisconsin Municipalities Mutual Insurance for all coverages (liability, property, crime, auto, workers' compensation, cyber liability, etc.) including cyber security coverage of \$1M (\$2500 deductible), and adding agreed value to 4 EMS vehicles.
10. Approve the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole to approve the Capital Equipment bids for Capital Borrowing Projects (Library Elevator (\$189,900), Public Works Dump Truck (\$188,970), Loader Mounted 2 Stage Snowblower (\$229,850) and Mower for the Oakwood Cemetery(\$6,675)).
11. Approve the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole to adopt the Summary Report of the Strategic Plan.
12. Approve the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole to approve the amended Employee Handbook section and adopt the July 14, 2026 version of the Employee Handbook.

13. Approve the recommendation of the Plan Commission to adopt Ordinance # 07-26 An Ordinance Rezoning a Parcel of Land from A-1 Agricultural District to R-1 Residential District City of Berlin. Rezone 381 NW Cumberland Street Parcel #206-01666-0200 COM 516' W OF THE SE COR OF SEC 4: RUN N 200'; W 100'; S 200'; E 100' TO BEG, City of Berlin, Green Lake County from A-1 to R-1.
14. Approve the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole to discontinue the observance of No Mow May in the City of Berlin. Rescind the suspension of Ordinance 78-4 Length of lawn and grasses from May 1-May 30 annually made by the Common Council in May 2025.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

Aldersperson Hill made a motion to approve the consent agenda, with a second by Aldersperson Stobbe. Roll call vote carried (5 ayes: Cauley, Hill, Klawitter, Przybyl, and Stobbe; 0 nay; 1 absent: Sorenson).

15. 2025 Audit Presentation and Acceptance – *David Minch, Government Audit Shareholder of KerberRose, presented the City of Berlin 2025 audit containing the Annual Financial Report and Management Communication Letter. Minch explained this is the first year KerberRose worked with the City and overall the audit went well. There were a few prior period adjustments made due to the software conversion and change in auditors. Minch highlighted items from the Annual Financial Report. On the Independent Auditor's Report he noted the financial statements referred to presented fairly, which is the highest level of assurance that can be provided by auditors. Minch also reviewed the Balance Sheet of Governmental Funds of the City, pointing out the balance for all governmental funds ended 2025 at about \$9.6 million. The general fund, also known as the main operating fund, ended the year with a fund balance of about \$3.79 million which is an increase from the prior year. Minch also noted the operating reserves made up the largest unassigned fund balance which are the reserves that build up over time as cash flows throughout the year. Minch compared the unassigned fund balance of \$3.7 million to the about \$5.6 million in current year expenditures and calculated that the unassigned fund balance is approximately 65% of expenditures, which is a very strong financial position, allowing the City to take advantage of any repairs, maintenance, or unbudgeted items that come up. Next Minch reviewed the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance. The general fund balance increased the Fund Balance by about \$245,000 whereas the total for all the governmental funds increased by about \$85,000 which includes all the TIDs and special revenue funds. Minch stated there were many positive aspects when looking at the operating results for 2025. Next Minch reviewed the Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Change in Net Position for the Proprietary Funds consisting of the water and sewer utilities, noting they had a good year. Water had an operating income of about \$173,000 with a total change in position being about \$189,000, meaning the rates customers are charged is generating enough profit to fund the operations of the water utility. The sewer utility had an operating loss of about \$35,000, which was not too significant, but is something to pay attention to, is not regulated by the public service commission, and the Council has the authority to recommend rate increases. A loss that small could indicate more repairs or additional supplies were purchased. The overall change in the sewer utility was about \$101,000, largely driven by the interest income earned on the cash held in that fund. Next Minch discussed the Footnotes to the Financial Statements stating they were the notes derived from information provided by Balcom and staff. Minch pointed out that Wisconsin municipalities are authorized to incur up to 5% in general obligation outstanding debt of equalized valuation set forth by the Department of Revenue. That calculation*

means the City could have up to \$23.6 million in general obligation outstanding debt. On December 31, 2025 the total City debt was about \$5.1 million, therefore the City debt load is relatively low compared to the total authorized amount the City could incur which is a positive aspect for the City. Next Minch reviewed the Schedule of Budgetary Comparison which is the Budget and Actual General Fund, noting it is a useful tool showing what the City planned for, adjusted for, and the actual results. The original budget has a decrease in fund balance of about \$487,000 and after budget amendments were made, projected to have a decrease of about \$88,000. He noted a positive fund balance increase of about \$245,000. Minch stated he thought conservative budgeting was taking place, and that some items were budgeted for in the general fund belonged in other funds, causing some activity to be moved. Minch added that it was a positive that the financial results for the general fund began with a projected decrease, but ended with a very significant increase in fund balance. Last Minch reviewed the Management Communication Letter, noting it is standard communication issued at the conclusion of all audits, summarizing what KerberRose did as part of the audit. Minch explained some weaknesses discovered during the audit. There were a number of journal entries needed to get the beginning fund balance in line with where it should be and to get things into the correct fund. He explained a significant deficiency, although very common, is the City had the audit company create the annual financial report, and explained that although the auditors assisted with it, it is the Council's responsibility for the fair presentation of the annual report. Another significant deficiency was in the segregation of duties. Minch explained this is common in governments with limited staff, and reminded the Council and staff to ask diligent questions when approving disbursements and approving receipts. Minch discussed recommendations such as consolidating some bank accounts and getting the accounting software properly set up with the third-party company to simplify the monthly financial reporting. There were no questions for Minch. Mayor Burgess expressed happiness the audit was completed timely. Minch stated Balcom and her team were very responsive during the process. Alderperson Hill stated the audit process was a positive, commended the City Administrator and Council for putting in the work to reduce the budget and make it work, and was proud of the City for making it happen. City Administrator Balcom stated the audit process was pleasant, and she felt much more supported this year. She is looking forward to help from KerberRose and the third-party software company to get the accounting software to work better. Minch added that he believes once the software is set up correctly and with some training the City will be able to see where things are at on a monthly basis. Mayor Burgess gave recognition to the office staff that helped in getting the audit complete. Alderperson Stobbe made a motion to approve the 2025 audit of the City's finances, with a second by Alderperson Przybyl. Voice vote carried.

16. Cigarette, Tobacco, and Electronic Vaping Device Retail License Request for Wal-Mart Stores East DBA Wal-Mart #1727 (861 County Road F, Berlin WI) – Discussion confirming there is no quota on this type of license and the business does not have to be planning to sell in order to have the license. Alderperson Stobbe made a motion to grant the Cigarette, Tobacco, and Electronic Vaping Device Retail License application for Wal-Mart Stores East DBA Wal-Mart #1727, with a second by Alderperson Przybyl. Voice vote carried.

17. Special Event Permit Request for Kingdom of Wonders Circus (free community event) July 21-23, 2026 (set up July 20) in Riverside Park – Scott Zabel, Street Superintendent, explained that it has been several years since Berlin has had a circus in town and Kingdom of Wonders is offering a free circus. If approved, the circus would be set up on July 20. The circus would be July 21 through July 23 at 6:00PM each night, lasting about 100 minutes, without any animals or clowns. Zabel confirmed the location of the circus would be at Riverside park near Klein field and the boat launch. Discussion on whether the circus would be a nuisance to campers and that

it could be however, it also could be free entertainment. Discussion on circus employee housing. Zabel understood they would house themselves on location and he would coordinate with the police department to allow overnight parking in the park. Alderperson Stobbe asked if a special license was needed to sell anything, and City Administrator Balcom stated the City does not require it. Alderperson Hill asked if it was known if background checks were completed on circus employees, and Mayor Burgess noted that was not on the Special Events Permit checklist. Discussion on the size of the event. Zabel confirmed the circus needed an area of 125' by 125'. Discussion that the circus is in multiple communities in Wisconsin. Zabel stated during set-up he and Andrew Dewitt, park staff, will be present and make sure there is plenty of sanitation. Alderperson Hill stated it was a great idea to bring another form of entertainment to Berlin, see how the community likes it, and consider bringing it back year after year, adding she would feel safer knowing they had background checks. Alderperson Hill made a motion to allow the special event permit for the Kingdom of Wonders Circus on July 21-23 at Riverside Park, with a second by Alderperson Cauley. Voice vote carried. Mayor Burgess asked if this went to the Park and Recreation Commission and City Administrator Balcom said it did not because there were no animals involved.

18. Real Estate Services Contract with CORRE Inc for WIS 91 (WIS 49 South to Berlin, Green Lake County) road project – *City Administrator Balcom explained the contract had some changes since last presented to Council and has been sent to Corre, Inc. She asked if Council would be comfortable with approving the contract if Corre had any additional changes as long as the City Attorney approved them. If so, add that to the motion. If not, the item would be brought back to the Council. Alderperson Hill made a motion to approve the agreement with Corre, Inc at a cost not to exceed \$63,900 plus \$4,300 per parcel for parcels requiring appraisal and appraisal review for real estate acquisition services for the WIS 91, WIS 49 South to Berlin, Green Lake County Road project, terms as set out in the Proposal submitted by Corre, Inc on May 28, 2026. This approval is contingent upon the approval of the contractor and agreement by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the attorney's approval, with a second by Alderperson Stobbe. Voice vote carried.*

19. Transportation Program and Meals on Wheels delivery update – *Susan Kiener, Berlin Senior Center & Recreation Facilities Director explained she attended an ADRC meeting at Green Lake County where she learned about empty miles, explaining there must always be a passenger in the vehicle when using grant funds and driver wages should not come out of the transportation grant for the meals on wheels delivery nor for assisting in the kitchen for the meals on wheels packaging. Therefore, the City needed to find an alternate funding source for these tasks as they were not in the budget. She explained she has been working with Ryan Bamberg, the Green Lake County aging ADRP unit manager and a plan has been put into place that as of August 1, all meals on wheels will be delivered by volunteers through Green Lake County, and the kitchen assistance, being the responsibility of Green Lake County as the meal site manager, will now be done by volunteers. Next, she reviewed the Senior Center transportation activity stating that for the past year and a half, there has been an average of 4 rides per week. Therefore, all parties agree the funds would be better utilized at the county level and the remaining transportation grant funds would be transferred back to Green Lake County. She confirmed seniors would still have access to the same transportation program, but would call Green Lake County instead of the Senior Center. Kiener confirmed meals on wheels would still be delivered, now by volunteers through the county nutrition program, and the kitchen assistance would be available, but would now be volunteers. She also confirmed current City drivers were invited to drive for Green Lake County and could receive payment from Green Lake County. Kiener stated these changes have been and will continue to be communicated to the Seniors. Discussion around Green Lake*

driving perimeter and fees. Local rides will be \$5 with the County whereas they used to be \$2 with the City. Rides within the County, including Ripon, will be \$20. Rides outside the County will be \$40 whereas they used to be \$55 with the City. Balcom explained the 2023 Chrysler van currently used was purchased with an 80/20 grant, the City paying 20% and the DOT paying 80%. Rather than go through the process of paying the State back for the van, staff asked the DOT if the current van could be transferred to the cab company to be used for the City program. Initial conversations with the DOT say this is acceptable and paperwork was received to begin the process. Ryan from Green Lake County would be willing meet with the Council to present an update on the changes. Alderperson Hill asked how the loss of the grant affects Kiener. Kiener explained the grant money pays for driver wages, fuel, vehicle maintenance and insurance, and some of her pay. City Administrator Balcom said she wasn't sure how much of her pay should have come from grant funds and she would need to run all the numbers because all the drivers and other expenses would be removed too. Alderperson Hill made a motion to direct staff to work with the County to ensure that the Transportation grant is turned back over to the county and the Senior Center ride program ends August 1, 2026, and to work with the WisDOT to determine the best use of the 2023 van and awarded grant funds, with a second by Alderperson Przybyl. Voice vote carried.

20. Raze and Remove Order for 127 W Berlin Street (Parcel No. 206-00542-0000) - Tim Ludolph, Planning and Development Director, explained this address is following a similar process to the home on South Wisconsin Street. The building inspectors completed an inspection and found the property to be in a condition where a raze and remove order is appropriate. He stated the property has had some recurring issues, however not to the current scale, and was asking for permission to initiate the process outlined by the City Attorney and authorize the follow-up steps, hoping there would be an outcome that is better than the worst-case scenario. Next Mayor Burgess reviewed background provided on the staff report. Alderperson Klawitter asked if the home was owner occupied and if they lived there now. Mayor Burgess confirmed it was owner occupied but they have since relocated as of the date in June (the date the County Health Department placarded the building as being unsafe for human habitation). Mayor Burgess asked if there were photos. Ludolph stated there were none that illustrate the current conditions, but they could be provided at a future date. City Administrator Balcom noted staff was told there is a possibility that the home may be for sale, however Ludolph has not been able to confirm that after trying several times to contact the homeowner. Discussion that if someone purchased the home, it would be less expensive for the City as the new owner would take responsibility for the property. It was noted the inspector said it was unreasonable to repair the building. Discussion the Council has not been notified of concerns at the property prior to this raze and remove order. Discussion on the history of ownership and address history of the property owners. Discussion on raze and repair or raze and remove. Ludolph confirmed he is looking for the Council approval to proceed with the raze order procedure that is outlined by the City Attorney. Mayor Burgess stated she thinks it is important the Council has all information available, including the property history, any measures that have been taken or requested that haven't been met, although she agrees the property is in serious need of repair. Further discussion that the Council wants to see a history of contacts made, the complaints made, any history of citations and fines, and any letters sent. City Administrator Balcom suggested beginning a title search to identify the responsible owners and serve papers properly. Alderperson Hill requests staff to present history for review by Council with raze orders. Alderperson Cauley asked if the taxes were current on the property and it was confirmed they were not. Further discussion about property ownership from 2023 through the present. Alderperson Przybyl asked Ludolph to clarify who has been contacted over the years, whether it was the same people or the same entities that changed names. Alderperson Stobbe asked

Ludolph to clarify whether someone is currently living at the property when raze orders are brought to the Council. City Administrator Balcom confirmed it was stated the property was placarded. Confirmation that when a placard goes up, occupants are given a week to move. Alderperson Klawitter asked if there were minors in the house. Ludolph stated he did not have that information, but information from the county suggests the property had been vacated and there is a relocation plan. Klawitter asked if Ludolph had contact with the owner via email or phone and Mayor Burgess responded that due to severity, contact was made with the Police and Health Departments. Alderperson Stobbe questioned why the Health Department has been to two houses in the past two months without the concerns coming to Council prior to that, adding the Council has two raze and removes that could have been dealt with before getting to this, stating she didn't know how the health inspectors get called. She added raze and repairs and raze and removes are expensive. Mayor Burgess asked this matter be brought back next month, with history on the property and photos. Ludolph confirmed there were photos. City Administrator Balcom explained the report from the Health Department was marked confidential. Mayor Burgess directed staff to request records from the Health Department. Alderperson Przybyl requested to find out how contact was made initially. Discussion on the procedures or steps when complaints of this nature are made. Mayor Burgess noted Police Department records are separate from other City records, and it would be nice to see one file, requesting this be brought back next month. City Administrator Balcom clarified a conversation with the City Attorney took place regarding the pictures and he advised not to include them as it was someone's home. Alderperson Stobbe suggested having pictures available at the meeting, not necessarily be put in the packet.

21. Old Business – Alderperson Hill asked if the Closed Session Common Council minutes needed to be approved. It was confirmed they were part of the consent agenda, item 8. There was no further old business.

22. New Business – None.

23. Adjourn – Alderperson Hill made a motion to adjourn at 8:05PM, with a second by Alderperson Stobbe. Voice vote carried.

*Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Brittani Majeskie, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer*