

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7 PM ON MONDAY, JUNE 2, 2025 BY MAYOR DEAN

PRESENT: Councilmember Steve Baker Councilmember Clarence Black
Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin Councilmember Dennis Hennen
Councilmember Gregory Patterson Councilmember Jessica Vilani
Mayor Bridget Dean

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Crystal VanVleck
City Attorney Dan Christ
Public Safety Director Matt Koehn
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski
Human Resources Director Jessica Stover
Emergency Manager Jack Blanchard
Department of Public Works Superintendent Adam Wozniak
Deputy City Clerk Rachel Patterson
Deputy Finance Director Amy Zurawski
Assistant to the City Manager Charlaune Stevenson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve the Agenda
Seconded by Councilmember Baker
Ayes: Black, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eugene Dixon, Berkley, spoke regarding the City sewer system.

Laila Reese, Berkley, spoke regarding her community group Rainbow Alliance of Berkley and its support of the LGBTQIA+ community.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Baker moved to approve the following Consent Agenda
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Matter of approving the minutes of the 40th Regular City Council meeting on Monday, May 19, 2025.

MOTION NO. M-39-25: Matter of declaring items as surplus.

MOTION NO. M-40-25: Matter of approving the submission of a SEMCOG Planning Grant Application for Coolidge Highway.

MOTION NO. M-41-25: Matter of considering the second reading and approval for an amendment to the Planned Unit Development previously approved for a multiple-family development on the east side of Coolidge Highway, south of Cambridge Road and north and south of Columbia Road, by the applicant, Krieger Klatt Architects on behalf of WJ Ventures LLC, 2465 Columbia, 2475 Columbia, 2468 Columbia, and 2476 Columbia and 2475 Cambridge.

PROCLAMATION NO. P-22-25: Matter of receiving a proclamation honoring the dedication and service of John "Jack" Blanchard to the City of Berkley.

Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black and Dean
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS: Matter of receiving any recognitions or presentations from the Consent Agenda.

Mayor Dean read P-22-25 in its entirety.

Jack Blanchard, Emergency Manager, said that he enjoys what he does, that's why he kept doing it. We do need emergency management, proud to be a small part of it.

Chief Koehn, Berkley Public Safety, thanked Mr. Blanchard and commended his work. He said he is well known throughout the county for his work.

Thomas Hardesty, Oakland County Homeland Security, thanked Council for the opportunity to recognize Mr. Blanchard.

Mike Crum, retired Berkley Public Safety Officer, spoke regarding working with Jack for many years and his reputation throughout the county.

Greg DuRoss, Berkley, commended Mr. Blanchard's work.

Mayor Dean said that Mr. Blanchard was here when she began at Council and that she has appreciated working with him over the years.

MOTION NO. M-42-25: Matter of approving a Charitable Solicitation Permit application submitted by Disarmory Ministries to destroy firearms every Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. now through November 1, 2025 in the parking lot of Greenfield Presbyterian Church, 2312 Greenfield Road. The organization will have a donation bucket placed on the property.
Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Motion No. M-42-25
Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gavin
Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black, Gavin and Dean
Nays: None.
Motion Approved.

Jessica Renstra, Disarmory Ministries, described the program. She also answered questions from Council regarding safety, waste, communication about the program to the community and shared stories of people who have used the program.

MOTION NO. M-43-25: Matter of approving a dedication ceremony in honor of former Mayor Maybelle Fraser, and the purchase of a plaque to be placed on the City gazebo in her honor.
Councilmember Patterson moved to approve Motion No. M-43-25
Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Vilani
Ayes: Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black, Gavin, Hennen and Dean
Nays: None.
Motion Approved.

Carol Bowman, Maybelle's daughter, thanked Council and stated that the gazebo looked beautiful.

MOTION NO. M-44-25: Matter of reviewing the Quarter 1 Strategic Framework report.
Councilmember Baker moved to approve Motion No. M-44-25
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani
Motion Reviewed.

Presented by City Manager VanVleck and Assistant to the City Manager Charlaine Stevenson.

Ms. VanVleck introduced Ms. Stevenson and explained the prior work completed on the report.

- Mission: Berkley will strive to enhance economic vitality, preserve neighborhoods, and foster progress to implement the City's vision and values.
- Vision: Berkley will be a thriving 21st- century municipality, rooted in strong neighborhoods and walkable design, supported by a caring community that helps every resident, business and visitor to flourish.
- Values: Caring, Innovative, Welcoming, Active
- Priority Areas:
 1. Organizational Effectiveness - Collaboration and strategic planning serve as core drivers of equitable, efficient and effective service delivery and policy development
 - Objective: Cultivate a strong organizational culture
 - Planning is in process for the summer staff picnic
 - Human Resources and City Manager are planning a citywide Leadership/HR Update to introduce and engage city staff in the strategic framework, as well as the future of Human Resources and Open Enrollment
 - Human Resources has engaged Oakland County in broadening our citywide training opportunities including access to online training resources
 - Objective: Optimize organization, structure, staffing, policies/procedures, and level of service
 - Parks and Recreation, Facilities, and Public Works have been consolidated under Berkley Public Services. This has created shared resources and responsibilities of multiple departments that consistently work together to deliver various services. The individual departments will continue to keep their names.
 - The Treasury and Finance Department have consolidated shared responsibilities, creating greater efficiency
 - City Manager's Office and the Clerk's Office have worked together to complete Phase 1 of the Boards and Commission Policy changes

- All human resource functions, including FMLA, workers' compensation benefits recruitment, disability, and COBRA, have been officially handed off to our Human Resources Department. Director Jessica Stover has hit the ground running, accomplishing a lot in the last quarter, including:
 - * Human Resources has created new and updated existing paperwork implementation, including: ADN Registration form, Background Check Authorization, and Personal Information forms
 - * Human Resources has implemented interview procedures, including standards for interviewing applicants.
 - * Human Resources conducted an audit of employee I-9 forms
- Objective: Identify and Implement Innovative Operational Solutions
 - Community Development has made all permitting available online except those that require a detailed plan review
 - The Clerk's Office has scanned all contracts and is migrating all documents to digital files on the internal server
 - The Finance Department has created and updated templates for daily tasks to standardize all processes
 - Public Safety has implemented the parking permit portal and is almost a paperless department
- 2. Economic Sustainability - A vibrant Berkley embraces creative and innovative economic strategies that welcome and encourage commercial and residential diversity
 - Objective: Identify, prioritize and deploy economic development tools
 - Community Development and the City Manager met with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Oakland County to discuss various tools and opportunities for development.
 - Community Development has presented the PILOT Workforce ordinance to the City Council, which provides an additional economic development tool to the city.
 - Objective: Implement Master Plan updates and development process improvements
 - Community Development has finished the Zoning Ordinance, a cover-to-cover reexamination of all zoning regulations.
 - Community Development is actively working on completing the Master Plan Implementation Matrix. The majority of it is complete, with several tasks underway and five on hold due to funding issues or a longer time horizon.
 - Objective: Complete Comprehensive Asset Needs Inventory & Management
 - Facilities completed an assessment of all municipal buildings in February 2025. The assessment provides an analysis of our long-term maintenance needs and life cycles of our facilities, and will guide us in a proactive approach to strategically invest in our assets. Future capital needs will be reflected in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.
 - Objective: Develop a sustainable asset investment strategy that supports funding for the city's capital improvement plan
 - The Finance Department implemented an overhaul of the City's Capital Improvement Plan process to ensure a thorough, well-thought-out, long-term plan to address our capital needs.
 - We have scheduled to set aside \$315,000 this fiscal year into the new Public Improvement Fund, which was created to strategically invest in and fund the City's capital needs.
- 3. Community Assets - Recognizing the cumulative human, financial and community costs of capital disinvestment, Berkley will develop a sustainable long-term capital investment strategy that bolsters quality of life
 - Objective: Improve Community Resiliency
 - The Community Development Department completed the engineering Design Standards, which includes a comprehensive guide to developing and redeveloping property. This focuses on non-residential and large-scale residential projects. These standards include current and future standards from Oakland County, MDOT, and other regulatory agencies.
 - Objective: Improve Facility/ Staff Security & Safety
 - The Clerk's Office has created a comprehensive election security plan with Jack Blanchard and the Berkley School District.
 - Funds were set aside in the FY 2025-26 recommended budget to update security measures at City Hall and the Community Center, including cameras and expansion of the card access system.
- 4. Open Communications - The City of Berkley prioritizes authentic, transparent, frequent and consistent internal and external communication strategies that foster confidence, awareness, pride and community connections
 - Objective: Identify and implement priority communication strategies within Human and Financial Resources
 - The Communications Department has launched the new website and fixed all bugs.
 - Parks and Recreation and the Library worked with the Communications Department to release the second program guide for Spring/Summer, providing residents with important information regarding events and programs.

- The Communications Department continues to provide robust information to the community via social media, email, specialized mailers, and the City website, including Council meeting recaps, changes to yard waste/chipper service, water main breaks, and city-hosted events like Winter Fest.
- Objective: Foster Meaningful Community Engagement and Genuine Relationships
 - The City Manager's office and the Clerk's Office facilitated two Board and Commission meetings with our AdHoc Committee and one with Board and Commission chairs to manage policy updates. Attendees were able to provide feedback on policies and procedures to the AdHoc Committee and city staff.
 - City staff started meetings with a group of business owners and residents to aid in planning and implementing the Dorothea Pilot Pocket Park.
- Objective: Identify community audiences and the most effective City "voice(s)"
 - The Communication Department is developing a communications survey to identify community members' preferred communication channels.
 - We have utilized the new website and social media to advertise job openings and the audit report with consistent branding.
- 5. Fiscal Stewardship- Berkley is attentive to its fiscal realities, yet prioritizes value over cost, seeks to balance the delivery of community services and unfunded capital and financial liabilities through revenue diversity, operational efficiencies and increasing private investment through the community
 - Objective: Clearly Define and Articulate the City's Long-Term Fiscal Realities
 - The Finance Department and the City Manager's Office recommended a 3-year budget (Fiscal Year 2025/26 - Fiscal Year 2027/28), including the 6-year Capital Improvement Plan forecast for the city. This year's budget document was transformed into a more user-friendly version that tells the story of the City's budget forecast, through the hard work of the Communications Department and Finance Department.
 - Objective: Identify Additional Funding Strategies and Partnerships
 - The City Manager's Office submitted requests to federal and state agencies for four projects for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.
 - Facilities and the Historical Museum submitted a grant application for the Community Museum Grant Program.

Ms. VanVleck wrapped up with an explanation of how and why the framework was initially created.

COMMUNICATIONS:

COUNCILMEMBER BLACK

- Stated that this would be his last physical city council meeting for a while. As he said last council session, he is deploying. He said that it is his intent to be a part of council sessions virtually as he is available. He said that he cannot tell anyone where he's going—don't ask or he'll kill you.
- He said that he loves doing this and loves this city and is honored to go and serve his country and represent it. He said that he thinks his wife, who has their four teenagers while he's gone, has the worst part of the job. When you deploy, your family deploys; the people that know you deploy.
- He stated that less than 1% do this, and please don't forget that ever. He said that this thing that we have, and all of us that operate under this flag, is because men and women do this. It is his job to keep them safe, give them the best orders he can, to lead them as honorably as he can. He said he has two beautiful girls who are going to be seniors, and he's going to miss 75% of their senior year. And that's tough. And even though he is the most handsome member of this council, he is going to miss these faces and working with these people.
- He said he is looking forward to putting foot to butt for this country and seeing everyone again in 10 months to a year. Prayers are accepted.

COUNCILMEMBER HENNEN

- Thanked Councilmember Black for his service and your sacrifice.
- For the Zoning Board of Appeals: no meeting in June.
- The Tree Board is continuing to monitor the health of the trees in the city, preparing for future outreach efforts. Their next meeting is June 23rd at 7 PM in the second-floor Public Safety Conference Room.

COUNCILMEMBER BAKER

- Echoed his colleague and thanked Councilmember Black for his service. Godspeed, take care, stay safe.
 - The Historical Committee meets next Tuesday, June 10th, at 7 PM in the second-floor conference room of the Public Safety building.
 - Please visit the museum Sundays from 2 to 4 PM. and Wednesdays from 10 AM. – 1 PM
 - One of the newer additions to the museum is some vintage Berkley High School marching band uniforms. Learn about that and more at berkleyhistory.com.
- The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) board meets the very next day, Wednesday, June 11th, at 8:15 AM, in the same location, second-floor Public Safety Conference Room.
 - The Farmers Market has been delayed to get some contracts signed, but everything is being taken care of. He said that they are eager to see that progress and bring that popular event back to our downtown.

- Meanwhile, there's plenty of other cool things, including the Berkley Pride Block Party coming up Sunday, June 22nd, from 1-5 PM. There'll be a kids tent with crafts and face painting, a teen lounge with games and crafts, DJ Laura from Elshar Productions as well as vendor booths, food trucks, Berkley Pride shirts and all that kind of fun stuff. To learn more about that and the other cool things going on in our downtown, visit downtownberkley.com.
- Finally, it was John Steinbeck who said, "In early June the world of leaf and blade and flowers explodes, and every sunset is different." There's so much to celebrate and learn about in June. As mentioned, it's Pride Month, Alzheimer's Awareness Month, and tomorrow, June 3rd, is Gun Violence Awareness Day. Juneteenth is on the 19th, World Refugee Day on the 20th, and Helen Keller's birthday is on the 27th. He encouraged everyone, as liaison to the Historical Committee and just as a fellow human, to take a moment to learn more about these key topics and milestone dates and take action to help advance whatever causes resonate with you most.
- Please stay safe out there and hug somebody you love.

MAYOR PRO TEM GAVIN

- Thanked Councilmember Black for what he's doing, a heartfelt thank you. He said that they are looking forward to seeing him back in person real soon.
- For the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:
 - Reminder that specialty camps are online and ready for registration at berkleymi.gov.
 - The next meeting will be June 12th at 7 PM at the Community Center.
- For the Library Board:
 - The Ice Cream Social to kick off summer reading is on Monday, June 16th, from 6-8 PM. The event is sponsored by Friends of the Berkley Public Library.
 - Gave a big shout-out to the Friends for over \$3,000 raised at the book sale they had. Thanked Library Director Matt Church, the Library Board, and the Friends for all their hard work.
 - The next meeting of the Library Board will be June 18th at 7 PM at the Library.

COUNCILMEMBER VILANI

- From the Berkley Area Chamber:
 - The Berkley ArtFest coming up very soon on June 14th; it's a great way to get out and get some art.
 - To those looking to get involved in your community, the Berkley Chamber has volunteer opportunities for families. Reach out at berkeleychamber.com for lots of opportunities to help out.
- Additionally, we're calling all artists for chalk art of all abilities. There are three different categories for the chalk art festival in July: teen, youth, and adult. So, everybody get your chalk palette ready and sign up!
- From the Environmental Advisory Committee:
 - There have been no meetings since the last council meeting.
- Extended warm wishes to all of the 2025 Berkley High School graduates. The world is your oyster. Go out there and make us proud.
- She ended by telling Councilmember Black that when he comes back, his welcome home lasagna is going to weigh even more than his departure one did. Stay safe.

COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON

- Told Councilmember Black to hurry back.
- The Beautification Committee met last week. They're working on a pretty cool Adopt-a-Garden program. More details are coming out very soon. They're also working on a park cleanup. They haven't set the date yet, but it's coming.
- The Planning Commission met and held a public hearing regarding a new development at 12 and Greenfield on the corner there.
- The City's volunteer appreciation lunch was today. Thanked Ms. Stevenson. He said thank you for putting that on for our volunteers' they are the heartbeat of our community. He said that what they all do and what was done did to honor them today was appreciated.
 - The volunteers did a vote and they picked Lisa Kempner as Volunteer of the Year. Serving as our Planning Commission Chair, Lisa Kempner's kindness, dedication, and generous spirit have touched so many lives and brought light to everything that she does. With a sprinkle of glitter. He said that she inspires him and most of Berkley to give more, care more, and just be more. Berkley is better because of volunteers and because of Lisa.
- Thanked Ms. Van Vleck and wished her a happy six months, official that day. He said that it's great to have her, and thanked her for all that she does for us.

CITY MANAGER VANVLECK

- Thanked Councilmember Patterson.
- Berkley's DIA Inside Out program painting was installed last week by the Community Center. Thanked Director McMinn for that update. She said she encourages everyone to go there, visit, and check it out. Visit dia.org/insideout to find out where all the paintings are for the program.
- Update on how our Dorothea Pilot Pocket Park Project is going.
 - The road will be closed June 14th through July 19th. The reason we're closing it down on the 14th is because it takes a little time to get everything together to close it down correctly. The soft-opening for it will be around June 19th. The 14th is a Saturday and also ArtFest, so we want to make sure we're ready for that. Other events using the space are in the works.

CITY ATTORNEY CHRIST

- No legal update.
- Thanked Councilmember Black for his service, wished him Godspeed and safe travels.

MAYOR DEAN

- Memorial Day was observed last Monday, May 26th. On the Friday before, she said she had been invited to attend the Memorial Day observance at Rogers Elementary. It was an annual event the school held, and she described it not as a production, but as an incredible observance.
 - The event began with a parade, and every grade participated—some students recited poetry while others sang songs. One particularly powerful portion involved children holding up placards showing the number of lives lost in each conflict. The Civil War had the highest toll.
 - Expressed her gratitude to all who had made the ultimate sacrifice. She said she believes it is vital not only for adults to remember, but for children to learn and understand, so that they too can remember. She said she saw this remembrance as part of the nation's history and a reason for the freedoms enjoyed today.
 - On Memorial Day itself, she said she attended a ceremony at the gazebo, followed by another at the Legion.
 - Shared that she came from a military family. Although she has not served herself, her three brothers had; she that she was grateful that all three had returned home.
 - Extended her appreciation to those who had made the ultimate sacrifice and specifically thanked Councilmember Black for his service, as it allowed the council to hold open meetings and the community to live freely.
- She attended the volunteer luncheon held on Monday, June 2nd. She said that it's a cooperative relationship between the city, departments, and the volunteers who support them. Everyone who attended, and those who couldn't be there but serve on a board or commission, they wake up every morning with a certain amount of energy. Sometimes it's a little, sometimes it's a lot. But choosing to give some of that precious energy to your community, outside of yourself, is commendable. She said she appreciates everyone who gives their time and talent, and encourages those interested to consider joining a board or commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:10 PM

Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black and Dean

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

Bridget Dean, Mayor

ATTEST:

Rachel Patterson, Deputy City Clerk