

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7 PM ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 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 Matt Zalewski  
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell  
Deputy City Clerk of Public Services Shawn Young  
Communications Director Caitlin Flora  
Assistant to the City Manager Charlaune Stevenson  
Human Resource Director Jessica Stover

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** Matter of approving the minutes of the 40th Regular City Council meeting on Monday, October 6, 2025, and the City Council Work Session on Monday, October 6, 2025.

**WARRANT LIST:** Matter of approving Warrant List No. 1415.

**MOTION NO. M-96-25:** Matter of approving a budgeted purchase of a new Continental Cargo 10' Value Hauler Trailer from Truck and Trailer Specialties, Inc. of Howell, MI, in the amount of \$5,900. This purchase is budgeted under account number 101-441-982-000 (General Fund) Equipment-Landscape trailer.

**MOTION NO. M-97-25:** Matter of approving an interlocal agreement with Oakland County Animal Shelter for services and disposal and authorizing the Mayor to sign the agreement.

**MOTION NO. M-98-25:** Matter of approving the appointments to various boards and commissions and hereby waving any conflicting provisions and adopted policy for reasons stated in the staff memo.

**PROCLAMATION NO. P-27-25:** Matter of proclaiming October 28, 2025 as First Responders Day.

**PROCLAMATION NO. P-28-25:** Matter of proclaiming November 2025 as Men's Health Awareness Month.

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.

Councilmember Hennen read P-27-25 in its entirety.

Councilmember Patterson read P-28-25 in its entirety.

**PRESENTATION:** Matter of receiving a presentation on the Communication Preferences Survey Results from the Communications Director.

City Manager VanVleck introduced the item saying Director Flora worked very hard on this survey.

Communications Director Caitlin Flora presented:

- Background
  - Goal: determine which channels our residents prefer to receive City information.
  - 147 responses received in a survey that was available from July 14 to August 15, 2025.
  - Survey was promoted through various methods, including social media, email, our website, and flyers around the community.
- Survey Takeaways and Actions
  - Multiple individual comments mentioned making the website easier to navigate.
    - The headers on the home page have been reworked to help visitors on the site know exactly where to click, and short links have been created for areas that are most often found to be confusing.
  - Results showed that more residents go to neighborhood “unofficial” Berkley Facebook groups for City information.
    - All City social media posts are now also shared in these groups to increase their reach.
  - Several concerns were shared about ensuring information reaches the seniors in our community.
    - The Director of Communications and Senior Program Manager have been partnering more often to make sure this happens.
- Many comments mentioned a desire for weekly or bi-weekly email newsletter recaps.
  - This is in development, and a weekly or bi-weekly email newsletter will start being shared with subscribers before the end of the year.
- As a result of taking the survey, 37 residents signed up to our City updates email list, and 41 residents signed up to receive City Council-specific updates.

**PRESENTATION:** Matter of receiving a presentation on the Strategic Framework Quarterly Report: Q3 from the City Manager’s Office.

City Manager VanVleck thanked Ms. Stevenson for the great job she does.

Assistant to the City Manager Charlaine Stevenson presented:

- 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
  - Organizational Effectiveness - Collaboration and strategic planning serve as core drivers of equitable, efficient and effective service delivery and policy development
  - Economic Sustainability - A vibrant Berkley embraces creative and innovative economic strategies that welcome and encourage commercial and residential diversity
  - 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
  - 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
  - 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 throughout the community
- Priority Area 1: Organizational Effectiveness
  - Objective: Cultivate a strong organizational culture
    - Human Resources collected information from surrounding communities regarding their performance appraisal process and surveyed to leadership staff to obtain internal feedback.
    - Held annual staff training and recognition of staff. Recognition of department-level accomplishments and recognition of staff and their contributions to our organization.
    - Conducted two Citywide trainings on FOIA by our Clerk's Office and Creating a Resilient Mindset.
  - Objective: Optimize organization, structure, staffing, policies/procedures, and level of service
    - An RFQ (Request for Quotation) was completed to change our healthcare benefits broker from Gallagher to Manquen Vance.
    - HR has aligned the dental and vision benefit year with the medical and hospital benefit year.
    - HR has filled in information gaps to make sure all employee positions, departments, and union groups are accurately entered into the BS&A system for the Audit.
    - The staff parking committee began meeting to evaluate the current on-street parking process and discuss expansion to municipal parking.
    - Department of Public Works and Community Development staff have interviewed Engineering RFP candidates and will bring a recommendation to City Council next quarter. (Q4)
  - Objective: Foster stronger relationships with community and regional partners
    - Community Development Director Kristen attended a Michigan Economic Developers Association course.
    - The Clerk's office staff were invited to attend the City of Ferndale's all-day FOIA training.
    - City Clerk Victoria attended the State of Michigan Bureau of Elections training in Lansing.
    - Communications Director, Caitlin, toured the SOCRRA Material Recovery Facility with the SOCRRA
    - Communicators Network and saw a behind-the-scenes look at what happens to recycling.
  - Objective: Identify and implement innovative operational solutions
    - Community Development has created QR codes for common permits so residents can access them on the BS&A online or fillable PDFs of permit applications.

- Library staff are continuing to tag and program the Library's Collection with Radio Frequency Identification tags (RFID) to help with checking out and returning materials.
  - Finance is working with all departments to prepare for BS&A onsite training/ system enhancement that will take place during the first two weeks of January 2026.
  - The Clerk's Office is now ¾ complete with Civic Plus Training for the Agenda Management Program and Boards and Commission Program, which should begin in December.
- **Priority Area 2: Economic Sustainability**
  - **Objective: Identify, prioritize, and deploy economic development tools**
    - Community Development has released an RFP for the Economic Development Strategy, which has been posted with proposals expected back mid-October.
  - **Objective: Expand economic recruitment and retention efforts strengthening the City's economic portfolio**
    - Community Development staff have been actively working with owners of the Roxy on their plans to bring back the Berkley Theater.
    - The new gas station/convenience store/restaurant will be constructed soon at the corner of Twelve Mile and Greenfield with the expansion of the existing 'Mug and Jug'
  - **Objective: Implement Master Plan updates and development process improvements**
    - Community Development has created a webpage on our website to connect homeowners to Oakland
    - County home improvement resources and resources on universal design and energy-efficient opportunities.
  - **Objective: Improve City/ DDA strategic alignment**
    - The City, along with the DDA, has worked together to bring back the Dorothea Pocket Park for the Boo!kley season. Events at this park will be hosted by the DDA, Parks & Recreation, and the Communications department.
- **Priority Area 3: Community Assets**
  - **Objective: Complete comprehensive asset needs inventory and management plan**
    - Our Facility Manager has started the Space Utilization study, which will take place at City Hall, to better understand how we use our current space and our future needs.
    - Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio has been contracted to update the City's 5-year master plan. The survey is public until mid-October, and the next engagement meeting is scheduled for Oct 23rd.
    - The Lead Service Line verification contract has been approved by City Council, and field work will begin in Q4.
    - The City has contracted with Coldwell Banker, Richard Ellis (CBRE), to acquire an appraisal of City Hall and associated properties.
  - **Objective: Improve facility/ staff security and safety**
    - The Facility Manager and other staff members have identified the primary scope of facility security upgrades and are currently working on installation concerns.
    - The Clerk's Office is working with Jack Blanchard to update and revise the Elections Security Plan for the upcoming November election.
    - The City Clerk is also working with the school district to ensure safety and compliance at all precincts amidst the school district construction.
- **Priority Area 4: Open Communications**
  - **Objective: Identify community audiences and most effective City "Voice(s)"**
    - The Community Survey from the Communications Department regarding communication preferences has ended. All Social media posts are now shared in Berkley Facebook groups with more details to come.

- The Clerk's Office has been preparing for its Election Worker Training Program that will take place in late October.
  - The Clerk's Office organized a City Council candidate forum with the League of Women Voters.
- Objective: Identify and implement priority communication strategies within human and financial resources
  - The Communication Director has been researching more ADA compliance requirements for our website that will be going into effect in 2027.
  - The Communications Department has sent five press releases to the media for many events and initiatives this quarter. (Historical Museum cemetery tour, CruiseFest parade and afterparty, planning outreach award for the Zoning Ordinance update.)
  - Our Communications Department has been updating our residents and community members on events via social media, flyer postings, and collaborations with Parks and Recreation and the Berkley Library for fall and winter events.
- Objective: Foster Meaningful Community Engagement and Genuine Relationship
  - The Berkley City Council was invited to the Berkley Arts Academy Grand Opening.
  - The Finance/Treasury department worked with the Communication Department to provide updates for the winter tax distribution.
  - In Q3, the first Dorothea Pocket Park successfully ended with a survey available for feedback. 94% of surveyors were 'Very Satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with the park. Results like these and others informed the Boo!kley activation plans with fewer programs.
  - Our Department of Public Works and Public Safety Department has successfully held a Touch-A-Truck event at the Community Center. There was a paint-a-plow station, opportunities to name trucks for the upcoming season, and a donut food truck.
  - The City of Berkley dedicated the gazebo outside City Hall to former Mayor Maybelle Fraser in recognition of her efforts in building it. There was a dedication event with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a special exhibit on Mayor Frazer's life at the Historical Museum.
- Objective: Clearly define and articulate the City's long-term fiscal realities
  - Finance has begun work on the new budget template rolled over from the prior year, which will be available to staff in early October.
- Objective: Identify additional funding strategies and partnerships
  - The City Manager's office is actively utilizing multiple resources to identify grant opportunities and build a strategy around utilizing those grants for future projects and initiatives.
  - Parks and Recreation has been working to transition from individual event sponsorships to a robust calendar year sponsorship guide. This will include CruiseFest as we try to cover costs as best as possible.
- Objective: Update financial policies and procedures
  - The Finance Department has worked with our tax payment vendor to allow residents to pay via ACH and make partial payments.
  - The Finance Department has made large strides in updating internal financial policies and procedures.

**MOTION NO. M-99-25:** Matter of authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Spalding DeDecker for Engineering Related Services.

Councilmember Patterson moved to approve Motion No. M-99-25

Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

**ORDINANCE NO. O-09-25:** Matter of considering the first reading of an ordinance of the City Council of the City of Berkley, Michigan to amend Section 114-27 Authorization and Establishment of Workforce Housing Exemption of Article III, Workforce Housing PILOT of Chapter 114 Taxation, of the City of Berkley Code of Ordinances to clarify that annual shelter rent payments less than 10% are permitted, as authorized by provisions of the State Housing Development Authority Act of 1966, Public Act 346 of 1966. MCL 125.1401, et seq.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Ordinance No. O-09-25

Seconded by Councilmember Black

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

**MOTION NO. M-100-25:** Matter of postponing to an undetermined date a Workforce Housing Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for The Columbia.

Councilmember Baker moved to approve Motion No. M-100-25

Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gavin

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

**RESOLUTION NO. R-19-25:** Matter of recognizing that the City's designated official newspaper, the "Daily Tribune," is ceasing publication as of October 30, 2025, and that, therefore, until further notice, the City hereby designates the "Oakland Press" as the City's official newspaper, effective October 31, 2025, for the publication of the City's notices, ordinances, and other pertinent items.

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve Motion No. R-19-25

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

## **COMMUNICATIONS:**

### **COUNCILMEMBER BLACK**

- No updates.

### **COUNCILMEMBER HENNEN**

- At the Tree Board meeting:
  - Update on the fall tree planting; 160 residents have signed up to date. 175 applications are desired, so there's perhaps a little bit more capacity yet. There'll be an additional 25 trees that we reserve for the parks and the Library. The request system to get a tree is now going to remain open year-round. So when that hits you, go ahead and sign up. The planting this year will be in late November or early December depending on the weather.
  - The board also continued to review their outreach approaches; they attended several community events this season and are going to be participating in the upcoming Monster Mash and the Holiday Lights Parade.
  - Their next meeting is October 27th at 7 PM.
- At the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting:
  - The recently approved the special land use for the gas station on 11 Mile required a variance for the location of their fuel pumps, and the ZBA granted that variance. They've now cleared all the obstacles and hopefully we will be able to see them open soon.

- The ZBA also denied a variance for a homeowner that had a second garage that they left standing after building a new one, and they needed to demo it and were not granted a variance to keep that around.
  - Yet to be determined if there will be a meeting in November for the ZBA.
- Stated that he had his annual Berkley Treats Map up for people giving out treats for Halloween.
  - Sign up your address and mark if you have allergy-free treats at [bit.ly/berkleytreat](http://bit.ly/berkleytreat).
- He said that he used to do the decoration map, but the DDA has now taken that over. Visit [downtownberkley.com](http://downtownberkley.com) and sign up for their list and put your decorations on the map; they're having a prize this year for that.

### **COUNCILMEMBER BAKER**

- The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) met on October 8<sup>th</sup>:
  - Discussions included: Boo!kley events, Columbia project, winter landscaping plans and more.
  - Congratulated the DDA and all the folks involved in the recent Witches Night Out. It was a great event. There were vendors and lots of good times; a trolley went around the entirety of the downtown. Thanked the business owners that stayed open and helped make Witches Night Out a delightfully spooky event.
  - Two more Bookley events are coming up:
    - This Saturday, the Trick-or-Treat Stroll is from noon until 3 PM, so bring your kids and have a good time.
    - For those who'd like to stick around a little bit longer, the Monster Mash block party overlaps that. It is from 2 to 5 PM.
    - All of this wonderful stuff takes place on Coolidge north of Catalpa.
  - For more information on that, please visit [downtownberkley.com](http://downtownberkley.com).
- The Historical Committee met the next week, Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - They talked about the scavenger hunt in the spring of 2026 and they're exploring ideas around having a lecture series with folks talking about interesting things in our past and talking with cool people.
  - Holiday ornaments are again available for sale.
  - Congratulated them, the Chamber and all the volunteers and city staff that contributed towards the fantastic cemetery tour at Roseland Park.
    - He said that it was a great time; he really enjoyed being out there and talking with folks and helping answer questions, and he learned a whole lot as well. It was a wonderful event and all the proceeds benefited the Museum.
  - For that and more, you can visit [berkleyhistory.com](http://berkleyhistory.com).
- It was Michigan Governor Whitmer who once said recently, "Michiganders should feel safe whether they're watching a movie at home or heading to the classroom." Safety is top of mind for all of us. This is Safe Schools Week, and he said that he is very grateful for the work that the Berkley Public School District is doing along those lines.
  - They'll be having a school safety drill, severe weather drill, district and shelter-in-place, and fire drill. My thought here was to help encourage us all to take this notion of safety to our families as well. Whether it's a fire or a power outage or the National Guard getting deployed or martial law being declared, please know what you will do if any of these events happen.
- Vince Lombardi once said, "Preparedness is the ultimate confidence builder," and in addition to confidence he said that he wishes everyone love and peace.  
Please hug somebody you love.

### **MAYOR PRO TEM GAVIN**

- For the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:
  - The second engagement meeting for the 5-year master plan is this Thursday at 7 PM at the Community Center.
  - Join us on Wednesday at Dorothea for some Halloween fun. Decorate a Styrofoam pumpkin and a small treat bag while supplies last. Keep an eye on the city Facebook page for any weather updates as well.

- The next meeting for the Parks and Rec Advisory Board will be November 13th at 7 PM at the Community Center.
- For the Library Board, a couple quick updates:
  - Construction of the study rooms is underway, so very excited for that addition to the library.
  - The Friends of the Library Book and Puzzle Sale will be taking place Friday, November 7th from 1 PM to 6 PM and Saturday, November 8th from 10 AM to 3 PM. The next meeting of the Library Advisory Board will be November 19th at 7 PM at the library.

#### **COUNCILMEMBER VILANI**

- The Environmental Advisory Committee had no announcements
- Berkley Area Chamber is hosting its State of the Cities this Friday morning at the American Legion on 12 Mile at 8:30 AM. Tickets are still available. This is your opportunity to find out who won Business of the Year and Businessperson of the Year.
- Election Day is the first Tuesday in November. All elections matter and make sure your voice is heard.

#### **COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON**

- The Beautification Advisory Committee will meet on the 22nd of October at 6:30 PM and then on November 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM over in the second-floor conference room of the Public Safety building.
- The Planning Commission will meet on the 28th at 7 PM in Council Chambers.

#### **CITY MANAGER VANVLECK**

- In addition to the great events that Mayor Pro Tem and Council Member Baker mentioned, there's a third event that's going to be taking place in the Dorothea Pocket Park before our next council meeting, on November 1st from 3 to 8 PM.
  - The city is hosting a community picnic that will include a plethora of activities, pop-ups, crafts, and we also encourage anyone coming to bring a non-perishable donation to the Berkley Cares Food Pantry.
- For more information on all of these that were discussed today, including that one, you can look on the city's website and the city's Facebook page. Gave a shout-out to Communications Director Caitlin Flora for putting this event together. She's spearheaded this and it's really evolving into a really cool event. Hopefully, we'll get really great weather and people will come. We'll have some great donations for the food pantry and people can just enjoy themselves that last weekend of this pilot closure of Dorothea.

#### **CITY ATTORNEY ZALEWSKI**

- Happy Halloween! Go Lions!

#### **MAYOR DEAN**

- The Election Committee met last week and she wanted to highlight the Hart Touch Writer. She got to see it in action: if a voter can't hand-mark the ballot with a pen, the Touch Writer has accessible features that allow the voter to choose selections through an electronic interface and then to print out a marked ballot. She said that she wanted to mention this because one, there could be voters out there that need this and she wants everyone to know that it's available, and two, this is just another way that the Clerk's Office has made voting more accessible. She thanked City Clerk Victoria Mitchell and her staff.
- The next DEA National Prescription Drug Takeback is this Saturday, October 25th from 10 AM to 2 PM. Reminder, it is prescription drugs — pills only, no needles, all liquids must be tightly sealed, and no plastic bottles or containers. Just put everything in a Ziploc.
- She said that she attended the ribbon cutting for Coolidge Pharmacy on Thursday, October 9th. It was so great to welcome Alvin back to Berkley. It's not the Rite Aid — it's Coolidge Pharmacy. She thanked Alvin for his commitment to Berkley. She said that he could have opened your pharmacy anywhere, but he chose to come back to Berkley, and she is grateful for that.

- She said that she spent last Saturday at Bombshell Treat Bar as part of her Meet Your Mayor escapades; she was there from 6 to 8 PM. She said that they had a feast: barbecue at the Legion and then Bombshell Treat Bar. She said that she just wanted to point out, when she is in a business doing my Meet Your Mayor, she always asks people where they're from. Saturday night there were people that came to Bombshell Treat Bar from Berkley, Livonia, St. Clair Shores, Royal Oak, Beverly Hills, Huntington Woods, Troy, and West Bloomfield. When you think about economic development, that one Berkley business drew people in. Some people were like, "Oh yeah, we had tacos first and then we came here," or, "Now we're going to get tacos," or, "We're going down the street," or whatever. It's so important to have a strong downtown, because when your downtown thrives, neighborhoods flourish — they go hand in hand, whether you want to believe that or not.
- She said that she just wanted to say hello to Emma and Abby who just moved to Berkley from Ferndale. Welcome to Berkley. She also gave a special shout-out to the Mulaney family and their friends from DC and thanked them for the robust and fun conversation.
- Her next stop on the Mayor's Road Show is Perch 313, located at 2717 Coolidge Highway. She'll be there on Saturday, November 15th from 1 to 3 PM.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

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Bridget Dean, Mayor

### **ATTEST:**

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Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk