

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORTY-FIRST COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN
WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM ON MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026 BY MAYOR DEAN**

PRESENT: Councilmember Steve Baker
Councilmember Clarence Black
Councilmember Gary Elrod
Councilmember Dennis Hennen
Councilmember Gregory Patterson
Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin
Mayor Dean

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Crystal VanVleck
City Attorney Lisa Hamameh
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski
Deputy City Manager Shawn Young
DPW Superintendent Adam Wozniak
Communications Assistant Seraphine Hinz
Finance Director Carl Johnson
Deputy Finance Director Ryan Shaw

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Maria Marcotte, Birmingham, spoke on behalf of her daughter, Congresswoman Haley Stevens, to acknowledge Councilmember Black as a returning hero.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve the following Consent Agenda
Seconded by Councilmember Baker

Minutes of the 41st Regular City Council meeting on Monday, April 20, 2026.

PRZ-05-26: Second reading and adoption of the City-initiated rezoning of PRZ-05-26, 2451 Franklin Rd. from R-1AB Single Family Residential District to R-1CD Single Family Residential District.

PRZ-06-26: Second reading and adoption of the City-initiated rezoning of PRZ-06-26 for the rear 33.5 ft. of 3170 Eleven Mile Rd. from R-1CD Single Family Residential District to Flex District.

PRZ-07-26: Second reading and adoption of the City-initiated rezoning of PRZ-07-26 for the rear 33.5 ft. of 3180 Eleven Mile Rd. from R-1CD Single Family Residential District to Flex District.

PRZ-08-26: Second reading and adoption of the City-initiated rezoning of PRZ-08-26, Parcel 25-16-352-026 to add the Parking Overlay District.

P-05-26: National Public Works Week Proclamation.

P-06-26: National Police Week Proclamation.

P-07-26: Berkley History Month Proclamation.

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

Regular Agenda

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

Councilmember Elrod read the National Public Works Week Proclamation.

Councilmember Baker read the Berkley History Month Proclamation.

Councilmember Black read the National Police Week Proclamation.

M-44-26: Proposal for Strategic Real Estate Services between the City of Berkley and Plante Moran and to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to negotiate the terms of the contract and authorize the City Manager to execute the final contract.

Councilmember Baker moved to approve Motion No. M-44-26

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

R-07-26: Resolution to expand the Social District boundaries to coincide with the DDA district boundaries, with the Commons Area designated as shown in the shaded area on the map included in the agenda packet.

Councilmember Baker moved to approve Resolution No. R-07-26

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

M-45-26: Award the contract for the Bacon Water Main and Road Reconstruction Project to Eminent Excavating LLC, in the amount of \$5,295,656.40 with an additional \$529,565.00 (10%) in additional contingency funds approved, subject to a review of the contract by the City Attorney and approval and execution by the City Manager.

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve Motion No. M-45-26

Seconded by Councilmember Elrod

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

M-46-26: Proposal for Construction Engineering Services as they relate to the Bacon Ave Water Main and Road Reconstruction Project as submitted by Spalding DeDecker with a not-to-exceed amount of \$748,703.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Motion No. M-46-26

Seconded by Councilmember Black

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

M-47-26: Acceptance of the quarter-ended March 31, 2026 budget-to-actual report.

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve Motion No. M-47-26
Seconded by Councilmember Elrod
Ayes: Black, Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker and Dean
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

M-48-26: Quarter-ended March 31, 2026 investment report as presented.
Councilmember Black moved to approve Motion No. M-48-26
Seconded by Councilmember Patterson
Ayes: Elrod, Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black and Dean
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

M-49-26: Third-quarter budget amendment 2026-4 for the 2025-26 fiscal year as presented.
Councilmember Elrod moved to approve Motion No. M-49-26
Seconded by Councilmember Black
Ayes: Gavin, Hennen, Patterson, Baker, Black, Elrod and Dean
Nays: None
Motion Approved.

Presentation of the City Manager's proposed FY 2026/27 budget for the City of Berkley, Michigan.

City Manager Crystal VanVleck opened the budget presentation with the assistance of Finance Director Carl Johnson.

City Manager VanVleck stated it has been a transformative year and thanked the directors.

City Manager VanVleck stated it has been a heavy lift, especially with the CIP. She gave separate thanks to the finance department. She said they have made quite a few changes to the budget document itself, along with assistance from the communications department.

She said tonight they will be going over the newly proposed budget.

- Financial and Revenue Trends
 - The city's taxable value reached \$904,330,290 in 2025, which represents 73.81% of the total assessed value of \$1,225,155,750.
 - Over a 10-year trend, taxable value has risen steadily from \$494M in 2015, consistently lagging behind assessed value growth.
 - Total millage rates have been reduced by 30.1% due to Headlee rollbacks, dropping the combined rate from an original 18.0000 mills to a projected 12.5836 mills for FY 26-27.
 - Specific millage reductions include a 23.6% cut to Operating, 48.2% to Public Safety, 48.2% to Sanitation, and 10.9% to Infrastructure.
 - For every tax dollar paid, the City of Berkley receives only 38%, while 43% goes to Local Schools & SET and 19% goes to the County and other regional authorities.
 - Total city revenue for FY 2026-27 is projected at \$17,338,854, with Property Taxes (\$11.1M) serving as the primary source.
- Strategic Framework Highlights
 - Plans include filling a long-vacant Deputy Director of Public Safety position and adding a health clinic incentive for full-time employees.
 - The budget increases funding for DDA façade and mural incentives and includes updates for the Community Development Master Plan and DDA Strategic Plan.
 - Major projects include the Bacon Ave. Water Main and Road Replacement (starting in 2026) and repair/replacement of Library entrance doors.
 - The city will transition a part-time Communications Assistant to full-time and implement an AI-powered chatbot to help staff identify communication gaps.
 - The BDPS K9 program will be reimplemented at no city cost due to prior donations, and \$90K in grant funding is being requested for Community Park updates.

- Expenditures and Inflationary Pressures
 - Public Safety is the largest General Fund expenditure at 45.6%, followed by Active Employee Benefits (9.3%) and Retiree Benefits (8.1%).
 - Operating costs are rising between 1% and 10% based on current trends, with healthcare specifically expected to increase by 6%.
 - Regional highway construction inflation in the Metro Detroit area has reached 63% since 2015, far exceeding the state average.
 - Equipment costs have seen drastic increases: a fire engine that cost \$580k–\$650k in 2018 is now estimated at \$1M–\$1.2M.
 - Individual equipment costs have also surged, such as fire helmets increasing from \$280 in 2018 to \$576 in 2025.
- Capital Improvements and Infrastructure
 - The total Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for FY 2026-27 is \$8,148,900.
 - Roads represent the largest capital outlay at \$3,681,900 (45%), followed by Water Distribution at \$1,335,000 (16%).
 - Infrastructure condition is a major concern: 60.3% of roads are rated "Poor-Failed," requiring heavy rehabilitation or reconstruction.
 - 79% of the city's water mains (approximately 238,858 feet) were built in 1930 and are reaching the end of their functional life.
 - The city faces an unfunded mandate to replace approximately 4,900 lead service lines of unknown material by 2034 (federal) or 2040 (state).
 - Sewer lining remains a priority with \$600,000 budgeted annually to treat the sections of the system that have not yet been lined.
- Utility Rates
 - The average quarterly utility bill will increase by 4.7%, rising from \$312.34 to \$327.16.
 - Variable Water and Sewer service rates are both proposed to increase by 8.0%.
 - Fixed costs, including "Ready to Serve" charges, Residential Storm Water (\$82.95), and Residential Solid Waste (\$17.21), will remain flat with a 0% increase.
 - The average resident's quarterly bill of \$327.16 breaks down to a monthly cost of \$109.05 and a daily cost of \$3.64.
 - Water cost allocation is led by Infrastructure Repairs & Maintenance (26.1%) and Storm Water Charges (22.3%).

Public hearing regarding the City Manager's proposed FY 2026/27 budget and supporting tax rates for the City of Berkley, Michigan.

Public hearing opened at 9:16 PM.

No comment.

Public hearing closed at 9:17 PM.

R-08-26: Resolution of the Council of the City of Berkley, Michigan adopting the City Manager's proposed annual budget and millage rates for FY 2026/27 and acknowledging the 2027/28 and 2028/29 budget projections.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Resolution No. R-08-26

Seconded by Councilmember Gavin

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

M-50-26: Adjustments to the fee schedule.

Councilmember Patterson moved to approve Motion No. M-50-26

Seconded by Councilmember Baker

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

M-51-26: Adoption of the Municipal Civil Infractions Policy.

Mayor Pro Tem Gavin moved to approve Motion No. M-51-26

Seconded by Councilmember Black

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

M-52-26: Shared Use License Agreement with Berkley School District.

Councilmember Baker moved to approve Motion No. M-52-26

Seconded by Councilmember Elrod

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

COMMUNICATIONS:

COUNCILMEMBER ELROD

- The Environmental Advisory Committee last met on Tuesday, March 17th.
 - They are launching their native plant garden in front of the Community Center, with a targeted installation date of June 3rd.
 - Their next meeting will be Tuesday, May 19th at 6:30 PM, in the second-floor conference room of the Public Safety building.
- The Beautification Advisory Committee completed spring cleanup in front of the Senior Center; they are looking for paver donations.
 - Nine signups are still available for the adopt-a-garden program.
 - The next meeting is Wednesday, May 27th at 6:30 PM, in the second-floor conference room of the Public Safety building.

COUNCILMEMBER HENNEN

- The Tree Board had a very successful Arbor Day celebration at the Library; they were able to give away 150 tree saplings. At their last meeting, they discussed continuing to look at strategies to make sure we keep our tree canopy healthy.
- The Planning Commission worked on an ordinance to regulate data centers, reviewed another cleanup for some miscellaneous zoning ordinance issues, looked at the payment in lieu of parking based on past work sessions and approved a small addition to Golden Grill.
- Stated that he was able to attend a Water Resource Commission training with Public Works Superintendent Adam Wozniak about our drinking water, sewage, and storm water management systems. They were able to tour the treatment basin facilities. The funding for the successful pilot program to bring free sewer backflow valves and some pumps into Berkley households has dried up, but they are working on getting additional funding for it and hope to bring that back to us and other cities soon.

COUNCILMEMBER BAKER

- The Berkley Historical Committee meets next on Tuesday, May 12th at 7 PM in the second-floor conference room of the Public Safety building.
 - For more information on what's going on with the Committee, visit berkleyhistory.com.
- The Downtown Development Authority Board meets next on Wednesday, May 13th at 8:15 AM.
 - For more information on what's going on with our downtown, you can visit downtownberkley.com.
- Finally, it was Yogurt from Spaceballs who said, "May the Schwarz be with you." Today is May the 4th, which is unofficially declared as Star Wars Day. He said that he wanted to celebrate because it honors a story that's connected generations of fans around the world. At its core, the Star Wars universe highlights teamwork, courage, and individuals from many backgrounds coming together for a

shared purpose. Those resonate far beyond the screen and are good examples for us to live in our everyday lives.

- Please hug somebody you love.

MAYOR PRO TEM GAVIN

- The next Chamber of Commerce meeting will be on May 19th at 5:30 PM at the Library.
- The Library is hosting a Saturday Morning Cartoons and Cereal Party event this Saturday, May 9th at 10:30 AM. Registration is available online.
 - The Friends of the Library Book Sale will take place on Friday, May 15th from 1 to 6 PM and Saturday, May 16th from 10 AM to 3 PM.
- The next meeting of the Library Board will be May 20th at 7 PM at the Library.
- Gave a heartfelt welcome back to Councilmember Black.

COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON

- Wished a happy Nurses Week to all the nurses, himself included, for all the hard work they do.
- Wished teachers a happy Teacher Appreciation Week, himself included.
 - Congratulated his 95 students who were pinned last Thursday. Never lose that passion.
- Welcomed back Councilmember Black, said that it's great to have him back.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals meeting for May 11th has been cancelled; there are no cases this month.
- The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meets next on Thursday, May 14th at 7 PM at the Community Center. They are still looking to fill a vacancy, if anyone is interested, please apply before the deadline on May 15th. Boards can't run without volunteers.
- Thanked the Dad's Club for the new scoreboard; it looks fantastic.

COUNCILMEMBER BLACK

- Thanked everyone for the calls, texts and care packages. He said that there's no way to describe deployment to non-military members. He said that everyone who goes has that responsibility so that someone else can come home. He got to come home but that means that someone else had to leave their family and go.
- He asked everyone to please remember that there are men and women in this community who are serving and are in harm's way tonight.
- He thanked everyone with the city for making it possible for him to serve virtually. He thanked his military leadership for agreeing to do it and Mayor Dean for always keeping him informed.
- Go out and catch a baseball game, catch a softball game, support our softball and baseball players and anything else going on in the city.
- He said that he loves this time of year when the weather breaks and the lemonade stands get going. He's going to try to make it to every single lemonade stand.

CITY ATTORNEY HAMAMEH

- No updates.

CITY MANAGER VANVLECK

- Welcomed Councilmember Black home.

MAYOR DEAN

- Take Your Child To Work Day was Thursday, April 23rd. Thanked Jessica Stover for coordinating along with Lydia Brauher, Caitlin Flora, all department directors, and staff who made that day happen. The kids were great. City Clerk Mitchell and her department had a mock vote; the kids had to vote for their favorite toy, and it was democratic until it wasn't. There were a lot of tears when somebody's favorite toy didn't win, so everybody got a toy. She said that it really means a lot when we can do these kinds of things as a work community as well.
 - She said that one of the questions that the kids asked was 'What's your favorite thing to do as Mayor?' She always says, the weddings because pretty much everyone's usually happy,

ribbon cuttings and interacting with people. Now she can add Take Your Child To Work Day because that really was a hoot.

- Said that she and Councilmembers Hennen and Patterson attended the ribbon cutting for Heavenly Pound Cake on Saturday, April 25th. Congratulated Sean and Kevin and their family for bringing even more sweets to Berkley.
- Gave a shout out to the Dad's Club for the scoreboard. It's a very generous donation. Thanked them for the continued commitment on the part of the Dad's Club to the youth in our community and to baseball. Thanked DPW for getting it hung; it looks great and she appreciates the cooperative spirit between Dad's Club and DPW.
- Congratulated PSO Daniel Smith on his graduation from the fire academy last week.
- Her next stop on the Mayor's Road Show is TLG Fitness on 11 Mile on Wednesday from 5 to 7 PM.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:42 PM

Seconded by Councilmember Hennen

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

Nays: None

Motion Approved.

Bridget Dean, Mayor

ATTEST:

Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk