

**THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORTY-FIRST COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN
WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:00 PM ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026 BY MAYOR DEAN**

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Clarence Black

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Crystal VanVleck
City Attorney Lisa Hamameh
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell
Public Safety Director Matt Koehn
Communications Director Caitlin Flora
Parks & Recreation Director Dan McMinn

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joshua Hunter, Berkley, spoke regarding the City Attorney's oath.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Minutes of the Regular City Council meeting on Monday, January 26, 2026, Special City Council meeting on Friday, January 23, 2026, and Special City Council meeting on Monday, January 26, 2026.

Utilize Oakland County Cooperative Contract 011677/011678 with DVM Utilities for Sewer Lining Services.

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

Regular Agenda

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

None.

Legislative update from State Rep. Natalie Price:

- Rep. Price said that she feels good to be back in her family's hometown of Berkley.
- She said that she has very fond memories of serving on city council not that long ago.
- She said that she represents all of Berkley, all of Huntington Woods, most of Royal Oak, most of Birmingham, half of Beverly Hills, and parts of Bloomfield Township and Southfield, in the new House District 6.
 - Rep. Price said that she tries to visit each year at the beginning to provide a year-in-review, explaining how the past year went and outlining priorities for the coming year.
- She said that before her standard year-in-review, she spent time last week in Minneapolis meeting with legislators and community organizers.
 - She said that she decided to go because, in this moment, state and local leaders need to witness what is happening, learn from people on the ground, and bring lessons back to Michigan to better protect communities and democracy.
 - She said that what happens in one state affects all of us, and that Minneapolis' work will help shape how Michigan organizes, legislates, and holds those in power accountable.
 - Rep. Price said that Michigan is not waiting to see what other states are doing and noted legislation in Lansing that requires immediate response to federal overreach.
 - She said that she had slides to show examples of legislation and provided some baseline information before addressing ICE and federal overreach.
- Rep. Price said that during her first term, there was a Democratic trifecta in Lansing and many important laws were passed.
 - She said that now, in 2024, the House is under Republican control, creating a split legislature similar to Minnesota.
 - She said that the 2024 legislative year was the least productive in history in terms of laws signed, which deeply distresses her.
 - She said that tariffs and federal cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and other state-run programs are slowing economic growth, and Michigan is bracing for these impacts.
- Rep. Price said that she supported local project disclosure and submission rules, and provided bill numbers for reference.
- She said these bills are also supported by the Michigan Municipal League, and she is a proud member of the municipal caucus advocating for municipal control and resources.
- She said that she supported creating the public safety and violence prevention trust fund.
- She said that despite some decreased constitutional revenue sharing, she advocates for municipalities to receive those funds in addition to the trust fund, not instead of it.
- Rep. Price said that she voted against requiring grantees to cooperate with ICE, as Republican control of the House is pushing municipalities to sign agreements with ICE without additional resources.
- She said that ICE is focused on immigration enforcement, not public safety, and municipalities should not be forced to act outside their scope.
 - She said that she voted against House Resolution 19.
 - Rep. Price said that she co-sponsored legislation introduced by Democrats to amend the state constitution to prevent federal suspension of fair trial rights, allow state legislators to visit corrections facilities without notice, and prohibit federal or state officers from masking their identity without immediate health risk.
 - She said that legislation also prohibits state or local revenue from being used for activities violating due process, bans censorship and book bans in libraries, restricts state or federal armed forces without the governor's permission, and limits immigration enforcement in protected places like hospitals, schools, and churches.
 - Rep. Price said that ICE actions make communities less safe and that her Republican colleagues are attempting to require local law enforcement to coordinate with ICE, diverting resources from public safety.
 - She said that Minneapolis DHS agents now outnumber local police nearly 5 to 1, costing over \$2 million in city resources for mandatory overtime.

- She said that these ICE operations intentionally make cities less safe and undermine local law enforcement trust.
 - Rep. Price said that in September, Rep. Rheingans introduced a bill (HB4941) prohibiting law enforcement agencies from entering immigration enforcement agreements, which she co-sponsored.
 - She said that ICE is not a public safety agency, and under the current president, has become a rogue actor, detaining U.S. citizens based on racially motivated suspicion.
 - She said that over 170 American citizens were detained in 2025 alone, and federal agencies are being weaponized politically.
 - Rep. Price said that her presence in Michigan is to ensure readiness for potential ICE activity similar to Minneapolis, and to prevent unchecked assaults on communities.
- She said that her focus is also on other Michigan issues, including 2025 legislation updates.
 - Rep. Price said that HB5696 updates laws on vehicle exhaust noise to allow local enforcement, with thanks to Chiefs Koehn (Berkley), Grewe (Birmingham), and Moore (Royal Oak).
 - She said she introduced legislation for sales tax exemptions on firearm safety devices, dog-friendly tasting rooms, prohibiting wage discrimination based on prior compensation, protecting healthcare workers from assault, expanding assisted outpatient treatment, and establishing good cause eviction standards.
- Rep. Price said that she serves on budget committees for appropriations, and she described how the budget process traditionally worked versus under Republican control, highlighting delays and harm to municipalities and schools.
 - She said that fiscal year 2026 included increases in K-12 foundation allowance and the public safety trust fund, but decreases in revenue sharing, behavioral health services, and legislatively directed spending.
 - Rep. Price said that she requested \$1.2 million for lead service lines in Berkley, \$6 million for Detroit Zoo water infrastructure, and \$12.5 million for green stormwater infrastructure, but Republicans decreased these allocations.
 - She said that state project cancellations in December 2025 clawed back \$650 million in funding already promised to communities.
 - Rep. Price said that Attorney General Dana Nessel stated these clawbacks violated the Michigan Constitution.
 - She said her main priorities include strengthening public health infrastructure, protecting healthcare workers, supporting direct care workers, investing in maternal and infant health, addressing racial disparities in healthcare, and collecting and acting on gun violence data.
 - Rep. Price said that she is focused on building Michigan's clean energy future, regulating data centers, ensuring fair taxation, environmental protections, and union labor commitments.
- She said that fully funding public schools, K-12 and beyond, has been a primary motivation for her service.
 - Rep. Price said that she is advocating for clear distinctions in funding for schools versus other general fund uses, ensuring municipalities have dedicated revenue.
 - She said that she is actively working on infrastructure improvements for schools, collaborating with community advocacy groups.
- Rep. Price said that she is available to constituents for legislative updates, know-your-rights trainings, virtual town halls, constituent services, and advocacy for appropriations.
 - She said that residents should reach out for help with state departments, unemployment claims, permits, grants, and resource allocation in communities.
 - Rep. Price said that she encourages engagement on legislative priorities and constituent issues, providing her email and office phone.
 - She said that her next virtual town hall is Friday, February 13th at 11 a.m. on Facebook Live.
- Rep. Price said that her district is safe partly due to local public safety efforts and she appreciates Berkley's commitment to keeping the community safe.

SMART Specialized Services – FY26 contract subject to resolution of the City Attorney’s concerns regarding Section 11.

Councilmember Patterson moved to approve Motion No. M-11-26

Seconded by Councilmember Hennen

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

Nays: None

Absent: Black

Motion Approved.

COMMUNICATIONS:

COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON

- The ZBA meeting scheduled for February 9th was cancelled. There were no cases.
- For Parks and Recreation, a Winterfest update: due to forecasted frigid temperatures and vendors backing out, Winterfest has been postponed until Saturday, February 28th, from 12 to 2 PM. He said that they are looking forward to a great afternoon of family fun and hopefully warmer temperatures where everyone can enjoy it, but not too warm.
- The next Parks and Recreation meeting will be February 17th at 7 PM. At the last meeting they had some new faces, and some residents came out, so hopefully they will have more this time. That always makes it more enjoyable for the board to have the community engaged.

MAYOR PRO TEM GAVIN

- The next meeting of the Berkley Chamber of Commerce is tomorrow, February 3rd at 5:30 PM at the Berkley School District administrative offices.
- The next meeting of the Library Board will be February 18th at 7 PM at the Library.

COUNCILMEMBER BAKER

- The Berkley Historical Committee meets next Tuesday, February 10th. For more information on our history and the committee’s work to preserve and promote it, please visit berkeleyhistory.com.
- The Downtown Development Authority board meets the very next day, Wednesday, February 11th. For more information on upcoming events, please visit downtownberkley.com.
- As a quick side note, the Berkley Days Committee meets this Wednesday. He said that he looks forward to seeing the additional work going on to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Berkley Days.
- Quick shout out to our Department of Public Works and the great people there who continue taking care of water main breaks, especially in the sustained cold weather we have had.
- With that in mind, as we shovel snow and deal with winter conditions, remember that February is Heart Health Month. Charles Schulz once said, “Exercise is a dirty word. Every time I hear it, I wash my mouth out with chocolate.” That may not be heart-healthy, but eating fruits and vegetables and exercising is something worth considering. Please look into what you can do for your heart health.
- Given all the snow and difficult weather, please be careful of ice on roads and sidewalks, and please hug somebody you love.

COUNCILMEMBER HENNER

- The Tree Board met last week; the Arbor Day Foundation has again recognized Berkley as a Tree City USA for more than thirty years in a row. We also received the Growth Award again.
 - One hundred twenty-nine trees were planted this fall, and the remaining seventy-one budgeted trees will be planted in the spring, including replacements around the library.
 - Their next meeting will be Monday, February 23rd at 7 PM at the Public Safety Building.
- The Planning Commission will next meet on Tuesday, February 24th at 7 PM here at City Hall.

COUNCILMEMBER ELROD

- The Environmental Advisory Committee is meeting Tuesday, February 17th at 6:30 PM at Public Safety, second floor.
 - As stated at our last meeting, Environmental Advisory is welcoming two new members, which is exciting.
- The Beautification Advisory Committee meets the following week, Wednesday, February 25th. These meetings are open to the public, and we welcome anyone to attend.

CITY MANAGER VANVLECK

- No updates.

CITY ATTORNEY HAMAMEH

- No updates.

MAYOR DEAN

- The view from Coolidge is a little different now, as the former auto parts store is now the new restaurant, The Beverly.
 - She said that she had the opportunity to dine there last Thursday evening. The vibe is warm and welcoming, the food was delicious, and the staff was knowledgeable and friendly. There is also bar seating. They do not take reservations for the bar, but it would be fun to sit there if you could not get a table.
- She said that she wanted to thank Chef Travis for choosing Berkley. She said that she is glad he decided to transform that vacant auto parts store into a restaurant, and she wishes him much success.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:03 PM

Seconded by Councilmember Elrod

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

Nays: None

Absent: Black

Motion Approved.

Bridget Dean, Mayor

ATTEST:

Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk