

THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE FORTIETH COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BERKLEY, MICHIGAN WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7 PM ON MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2025 BY MAYOR DEAN

PRESENT: Councilmember Steve Baker Councilmember Dennis Hennen
Councilmember Gregory Patterson Councilmember Jessica Vilani
Councilmember Clarence Black (attending remotely from Fort Bliss, TX on military duty)
Mayor Bridget Dean

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tem Ross Gavin

OTHER STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Crystal VanVleck
City Attorney Dan Christ
City Clerk Victoria Mitchell
Deputy City Manager of Public Services Shawn Young
Community Development Director Kristen Kapelanski
Finance Director Carl Johnson
Parks & Recreation Director Dan McMinn
Deputy City Clerk Rachel Patterson
Assistant to the City Manager Charlaune Stevenson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Patterson moved to approve the Agenda
Seconded by Councilmember Vilani
Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker and Dean
Nays: None
Absent: Gavin
Councilmember Black had technical difficulties and was unable to vote.
Motion Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Don Callihan and Sue Richardson, members of the Berkley Historical Committee, explained a new Museum membership program.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Matter of approving the minutes of the 40th Regular City Council meeting on Monday, June 2, 2025.

WARRANT LIST: Matter of approving Warrant List No. 1411.

MOTION NO. M-45-25: Matter of appointing members to boards and commissions.

MOTION NO. M-46-25: Matter of appointing Deputy City Manager for Public Services Shawn Young as the City of Berkley's representative and Superintendent of Public Works Adam Wozniak as the alternate representative to the Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority (SOCRRA) Board of Trustees for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2026; and instruct the City Clerk to send a copy of this motion to the SOCRRA Board.

MOTION NO. M-47-25: Matter of appointing Deputy City Manager for Public Services Shawn Young as the City of Berkley's representative and Superintendent of Public Works Adam Wozniak as the alternate representative to the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA) Board of Trustees for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2026; and instruct the City Clerk to send a copy of this motion to the SOCWA Board.

MOTION NO. M-48-25: Matter of approving the utilization of a WRC contract with additional City of Berkley specifications for water service line material verification work related to the TMF grant.

PROCLAMATION NO. P-22-25: Matter of proclaiming July 2025 as Parks and Recreation month in the City of Berkley.

Ayes: Hennen, Patterson, Vilani, Baker, Black and Dean
Nays: None
Absent: Gavin
Councilmember Black had technical difficulties and was unable to vote.

Motion Approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

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

MOTION NO. M-49-25: Matter of authorizing the amendment of the 2024/25 budget as presented.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Motion No. M-49-25

Seconded by Councilmember Baker

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

Nays: None.

Absent: Gavin

Motion Approved.

MOTION NO. M-50-25: Matter of approving the assessing services proposal from WCA Assessing.

Councilmember Vilani moved to approve Motion No. M-50-25

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

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

Nays: None.

Absent: Gavin

Motion Approved.

MOTION NO. M-51-25: Matter of considering PSU-01-25 special land use request for 4162 Twelve Mile Road, 4150 Twelve Mile Road, and 4138 Twelve Mile Road for the operation of a gas station/convenience store with an accessory restaurant counter in the Gateway District on the north side of Twelve Mile Road between Greenfield Road and Ellwood Avenue under the condition that they obtain a variance from the ZBA or the applicant adjusts the site plan.

Councilmember Hennen moved to approve Motion No. M-51-25

Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

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

Nays: None

Absent: Gavin

Motion Approved.

MOTION NO. M-52-25: Matter of accepting the Boards & Commissions Handbook.

Councilmember Baker moved to approve Motion No. M-52-25

Seconded by Councilmember Patterson

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

Nays: None

Absent: Gavin

Motion Approved.

COMMUNICATIONS:

COUNCILMEMBER BLACK

- Explained that he was attending remotely from Fort Bliss, Texas.
- No updates from the Committee for Engagement & Transparency.
- Thanked everyone that reached out to him to wish him and his team a successful deployment.
- He stated that he looks forward to the opportunity to be a part of Council sessions virtually as he is able. Thanked City Clerk Mitchell, Chief Innovation Officer Lisica and City Manager VanVleck for assisting him with attending meetings virtually.

COUNCILMEMBER HENNEN

- The Tree Board will meet next Monday, June 23rd.
- After the drought of no meetings, the Zoning Board of Appeals now has four cases to hear. Two of them are the special land uses that were heard tonight.
 - Their next meeting will be on Monday, July 14th at 7 PM.
- Stated that he had the opportunity to attend the SEMCOG General Assembly last week at the Detroit Zoo. He said that it was fun to see the new projects that they have going on.

COUNCILMEMBER BAKER

- The Historical Committee met last week, on June 10th. Thanked the volunteers that make that committee great and those who were able to attend and represent at the Art Bash.
 - If you didn't get a chance to see them there they will they will be back at the Pride event on June 22nd.
 - As mentioned earlier during citizen comments they're ramping up a Friends of the Berkley Historical Museum.
 - They're rolling out some new sales items; they were well received at Art Bash and hopefully there'll still be some stock left for the Pride event.

- There's work underway now for a cemetery tour this fall; they're targeting Saturday, October 18th at Roseland Park. The last time the Committee did this volunteers dressed up in character for the various persons by which grave they stood and had stories to tell about them and their role in Berkley and the region. More news to come as we get closer on that.
 - Learn about that and all sorts of other cool stuff at berkleyhistory.com.
- The DDA met the very next day, June 11th. Thanked those volunteers and especially Donna Dirkse, operator owner of the Neighbor Shoppe. She's been on the board for a long time but this meeting was her last. She's refocusing on priorities and adjusting to work on her business even that much more; she brought a strong, stable voice to the DDA and helped with lots of cool things. He stated that they're very grateful for Donna's service.
 - The maintenance work is complete on the theater marquee and they're considering options for when and how to light it up.
- Stated that as many have heard the Farmer's Market remains paused for now; they're working to tie up all the loose ends.
- The kickoff event for the Dorothea Pocket Park is on Saturday, June 21st. Find more information at berkleymi.gov/dorothea to see an incredible schedule of events throughout June and into July.
 - If you have an idea of something you'd like to do, something fun you want to just set up like a Euchre night or something cool there, or if you have a band and you want to come play, go to berkleymi.gov/dorothea and get in touch with us there. And also downtownberkley.com.
- Oscar Handlin once wrote "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history." You may not know that this month is National Immigrant Heritage Month. We honor the strength, resilience, and dreams of immigrants who continue to shape our communities and enrich our cultures. In times of uncertainty and challenge their stories remind us of the power of hope, perseverance, and belonging. Let us stand in solidarity, uplifting immigrant voices, recognizing their contributions, and advocating for a future rooted in dignity, compassion, and justice. Every journey matters. Every voice belongs. Together let's build a world where all feel safe, valued, and truly at home.
- Please hug somebody you love. In these days of authoritarian dictator wannabes, a hug could really help somebody feel just a little bit safe and have a little bit of comfort.

COUNCILMEMBER VILANI

- From the Environmental Advisory Committee, the next meeting is this Thursday, June 19th at 6:30 PM on the second floor of the Public Safety Building.
- Extended a big thank you to all the volunteers of who helped work the bike corral at this past weekend's Art Bash, providing that safe space to keep your bikes and supporting our walkable community.
- From the Berkley Area Chamber:
 - You can get your free copies of the Berkley Has Heart book right now and also vote in the annual photography contest. Congratulated all the finalists. Hopefully you got a chance to check them out at the fair, lots of great photos in there showcasing our city.
 - The Berkley Chamber is also still seeking volunteers. Your entire family can get involved at all of our events; head to the website to learn more information about that.
- She said she is looking forward to this Sunday's Pride Festival here in Berkley. Please come say hello, she'll be working the afternoon session of the merch booth.

COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON

- The Planning Commission hasn't met since last City Council meeting, no updates.
- Thanked the volunteers from the Beautification Advisory Committee that helped clean up City Hall, the Public Safety Building, and the Friends Park. It looks great; they spread it out over a couple days and really had a lot of volunteers out to help.
- Stated that he and Mayor Dean were invited to talk last week at the Michigan Dental Association for "Pizzas and Politics" with the pediatric dentistry residents of Children's Hospital Michigan talking about advocacy and how to get involved. Wishing them all well. It was a splendid night; there were other elected officials there, including State Rep Price as well as some of the county commissioners.

CITY MANAGER VANVLECK

- As Councilmember Baker stated, the Dorothea Pilot Pocket Park is kicking off.
 - You may have already seen it, DPW is hard at work this weekend doing the things that they needed to do to close it down safely using some very large cement planters. You've seen a couple of other things if you've passed by there, including a shade sail and some bistro lighting.
 - We will be finalizing over the next few days, actually our summer campers are going to put the finishing touches on it with paint on Wednesday the 18th. It will have a soft opening on the 19th. There will be yoga class out there Thursday, June 19th at 3:45 PM Sign up for that where you would register for classes normally. It's free but please sign up just so they can keep control of the numbers.
 - Stated that there will be a kickoff event from 1 to 4 PM. on June 21st.
 - At berkleymi.gov/dorothea residents can find a running list of the events and the dates. It's robust and it continues to build as we finalize some of the things.
 - Also visit the City's Facebook page to see the different events that are taking place. The final party will be a summer block club party hosted by the DDA on July 19th.

- If you have any ideas or you want to participate and you're not sure how, just reach out to us and let us know.
- The City will be having a dedication ceremony for Mayor Fraser before our next meeting, July 7th at 5:30 PM, at the gazebo behind City Hall and we will be honoring her dedication to the building of that gazebo with a plaque. Anyone from the public's invited, especially anyone who knew and honored the Mayor please feel free to attend.

CITY ATTORNEY CHRIST

- Stated that Council will recall that one of the cases against the City of Berkley is a challenge to a denial of a use variance regarding the property at 2114 West 11 Mile Road. The Oakland Circuit Court judge upheld the Zoning Board's denial of that use variance. They appealed it to the Michigan Court of Appeals. Last week the Court of Appeals notified the parties that the plaintiff challenger has not perfected its appeal. It's now on a very short window where the briefing has to happen or the party may be subject to involuntary dismissal of its appeal. Said that he will continue to keep Council apprised of any developments in the case but that's where it stands right now.

MAYOR DEAN

- Said that she and Councilmember Hennen, along with about 20 other city employees, attended the North American Annual Active Assailant Conference last week and had the opportunity to learn and hear from law enforcement and other experts in the field as well as the Mayor and City Manager from Highland Park, Illinois where an active shooter opened fire on their Fourth of July parade a few years ago.
 - It was a difficult conference in some ways but necessary; being prepared is something that you can do by being proactive, knowing what the roles and responsibilities are.
 - Hearing from Sarah Peck from United on Guns and the DART program through the Sheriff's Office, everything that's been learned has now been put into documents so that she and other elected officials will know what to do in the event of. She said that it's great information to have and that she sincerely hopes we never have to use it.
- Stated that she had two stops on the Mayor's Road Show last week. She said she was at Amici's Kitchen and Living Room on Thursday and the Chop Shop on Saturday morning. She said that if you ever wonder if you're living in the best city, just hang out and just start talking to people. There was so much love for Berkley in both of those places—even from people that don't live here. She said she even got a couple comments like "I don't live in Berkley but I would love to live here." Every single person that she spoke with could not say enough good about our city. Residents did have questions, thoughtful questions, and she answered them to the best of her ability.
 - After visiting the Chop Shop, she went to the Art Bash and again the weather was perfect. It seemed like there was a bigger footprint this year, way more vendors. She said she wanted to acknowledge the work of Public Safety and DPW for those events along with all the volunteers and the Chamber. It takes so many people to make these events happen and not only do they happen in Berkley but she thinks we set the bar.
- She shared that she had her first experience with the Berkley Outdoor Social Scene (BOSS); she and a friend had lunch at Mongers outside and split a glass of wine. She said that what she loved was that she experienced it in action: you got your cup, you knew where you could walk around. It was good and she thinks people are utilizing it and that's really what you want at the end of the day.
- Mayor Pro Tem Gavin is under the weather so she gave his update for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board:
 - The first concert in the park is at Oxford Park on June 26th at 7:00 PM and the featured entertainment will be Sonic Freeway. So, make sure you mark your calendars or set a reminder if you don't want to miss it.
- Pointed out that we received 1.04 million dollars of HUD reimbursement for the whole HVAC system that was put in. She said that she thinks it's really important to note that the city has received, between both state and Federal, 1.8 million dollars to do these improvements and we are very grateful. She said that they've been put to much needed and good use in Public Safety.
- Extended a warm welcome to Dispatcher Andy Bowitz; Andy brings a wealth of experience having served a dedicated career as a firefighter after joining the US Air Force in 1996. He is also a Berkley resident. She said that she knows that it takes a special person to do dispatch; you have to be calm.
- And lastly, she said she will be attending in her role on the Board of Trustees for the Michigan Municipal League Workers Comp Fund their strategic planning and quarterly meeting this week. She said that she'll be bringing back more information and it's just a great opportunity.
 - Councilmember Hennen will be there as well, he's on the Board of Trustees for MML.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Patterson moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:13 PM

Seconded by Councilmember Vilani

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

Nays: None

Absent: Gavin

Motion Approved.

ATTEST:

Bridget Dean, Mayor

Victoria Mitchell, City Clerk