

**Proposed FY 2023 City of Berlin Budget
Public Hearing - May 25, 2022**

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and held a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present by roll call were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Remillard, Roland Theberge, Morgan, Higbee, Berthiaume, Morency and Robert Theberge. Councilor Eastman was absent.

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Chief of Police Dan Buteau, Captain Nathan Roy, Fire Chief James Watkins, Airport Manager Marcel Leveille, SAU3 Superintendent Julie King, SAU3 Business Manager Marion Moore, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Priscilla Leveille, Lori Korzen, Steven Korzen, Stuart Light, William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun and Members of the Public.

Mayor Grenier thanked those in attendance and advised public comments must be addressed directly to the Chair. He commented since there were not a lot of people in attendance he would not be limiting comments. He stated as of now the budget represents a tax increase of \$3.31. The current equalization ratio for the City is at 65%. This will be going up as a result of the full statistical revaluation in process now. The property values are currently under market. He is expecting the equalization ratio to go up as property values will go up which he assumes will reflect a price drop of \$3.00 to \$5.00 per thousand on the tax rate. He advised in discussion with Representative Robert Theberge that if HB 1221 passes, more funding will be made available to the City. He commented the biggest impact to the budget comes from energy expenses which doubled from FY22. He commented the Fire Department needs a ladder truck which the first installment is reflected in this budget as it could be two years before it's available. He is hopeful that towards the end of budget process \$300,000-\$400,000 can be assigned to street repairs and paving. There are no big capital issues in this budget.

Mayor Grenier opened the duly scheduled and advertised public hearing at approximately 6:41pm.

Stuart Light of 213 High Street stated he would like to make a procedural point. He doesn't feel public employees or union members should be able to speak as their input is already built in the documents presented tonight. He feels comments should be restricted to taxpayers and business owners. He reminded Council they are agents of the people.

Mayor Grenier responded the City Attorney as advised the City does not have the right to restrict any citizen to speak. He doesn't have the authority to do so and will not restrict comments.

Mayor Grenier read the Proposed FY2023 Budget into the record, and advised the public they could comment on any section presented.

Account		FY22 BUDGET	FY23 COUNCIL
01-401	MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL Total	\$ 71,058.00	\$ 70,958.00
01-402	ADMINISTRATION Total	\$ 1,142,939.63	\$ 1,223,960.00
01-403	ELECTIONS Total	\$ 9,900.00	\$ 18,450.00
01-404	CITY HALL AND OTHER BUILDINGS Total	\$ 61,994.00	\$ 65,810.00
01-405	SPECIAL FUNDS Total	\$ 310.00	\$ 300.00
01-406	PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INS Total	\$ 80,723.00	\$ 89,000.00
01-408	CENTRAL SERVICES Total	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 33,500.00
01-409	DISCOUNTS/ ABATEMENTS/DEEDED P Total	\$ -	\$ -
01-410	PERSONNEL BENEFITS Total	\$ 388,286.00	\$ 434,153.00
01-411	CONTINGENCY Total	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 10,000.00
01-412	OUTSIDE AGENCIES Total	\$ 82,537.00	\$ 83,822.00
01-413	CEMETERY Total	\$ 21,100.00	\$ 27,550.00
01-416	IT DEPARTMENT Total	\$ 235,800.00	\$ 215,800.00
	TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$ 2,132,247.63	\$ 2,273,303.00

Mayor Grenier advised the Mayor and City Council line includes the audit. He also advised that the increase in the Elections line item increased significantly as there are two elections in FY2023, the State Primary and State General Election. He commented the Personnel Benefits line increased due to retirements and accrued time being paid out at time of retirement.

01-420	POLICE DEPARTMENT Total	\$ 3,527,750.00	\$ 3,797,220.00
01-421	FIRE DEPARTMENT Total	\$ 2,426,872.71	\$ 2,455,402.00
01-422	STREET LIGHTING Total	\$ 115,500.00	\$ 95,500.00
01-423	AMBULANCE SERVICE Total	\$ 359,004.00	\$ 377,781.00
01-424	SPECIAL PUBLIC SAFETY Total	\$ 137,130.00	\$ 169,410.00
	TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	\$ 6,566,256.71	\$ 6,895,313.00

01-425	HOUSING DIVISION Total	\$ 95,955.00	\$ 96,016.00
	TOTAL HOUSING DIVISION	\$ 95,955.00	\$ 96,016.00
01-426	CODE ENFORCEMENT Total	\$ 131,774.46	\$ 126,114.00
	TOTAL CODE DIVISION	\$ 131,774.46	\$ 126,114.00
01-430	PUBLIC WORKS Total	\$ 2,249,464.16	\$ 2,262,825.00
01-436	SOLID /PW Total	\$ 850,205.16	\$ 875,841.00
	TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	\$ 3,099,669.32	\$ 3,138,666.00

Mayor Grenier advised the Solid Waste line item includes tipping fees at the Mt. Carberry landfill.

01-441	WELFARE Total	\$ 115,998.00	\$ 123,465.00
01-449	PARKS Total	\$ 287,427.54	\$ 302,803.00
01-450	RECREATION DEPARTMENT Total	\$ 207,558.80	\$ 217,323.00
01-451	LIBRARY Total	\$ 211,842.12	\$ 229,356.00
	TOTAL COMMUNITY SERVICES	\$ 822,826.46	\$ 872,947.00
01-470	DEBT SERVICE Total	\$ 890,156.00	\$ 889,304.00
01-480	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS Total	\$ 1,791,183.00	\$ 997,768.00
	TOTAL CITY DEBT AND CIP	\$ 2,681,339.00	\$ 1,887,072.00

Mayor Grenier advised the Debt Service line item includes two bonds the City took out for Route 110 and Route 16 road projects. He also advised the Capital Improvement Projects line item is for capital items not funded that need to be done.

01-460	SCHOOL OPERATING BUDGET Total	\$ 20,054,378.14	\$ 21,060,921.00
01-461	SCHOOL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS Total	\$ 294,000.00	\$ 155,000.00
	TOTAL SCHOOL GENERAL FUND	\$ 20,348,378.14	\$ 21,215,921.00

Stuart Light of 213 High Street questioned why the City is rewarding failure. Because of the statistics he read, he believes Berlin Schools are all underperforming and an increase in the school operating budget is just rewarding failure.

01-407	COUNTY TAX Total	\$ 2,261,284.00	\$ 2,388,686.00
01-414	TRANSFER OUT Total	\$ 58,237.00	\$ 69,659.00
	TOTAL CITY GENERAL FUND	\$ 38,197,967.72	\$ 38,963,697.00

Mayor Grenier advised the Transfer Out line item includes the Airport Subsidy.

	OTHER CITY FUNDS		
FUND 10	SCHOOL EDUCATION GRANTS Total	\$ 9,586,275.00	\$ 8,751,273.00
11-464	SCHOOL FOOD SERVICES Total	\$ 747,243.99	\$ 747,244.00
19-438	RECREATION ACTIVITY FUND Total	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
21-402	BERLIN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT Total	\$ 361,444.00	\$ 333,444.00
FUND 30	GRANT FUND Total	\$ 194,600.00	\$ 1,221,406.00
60-432	SEWER FUND TOTAL w/ Capital and Debt Service	\$ 3,468,439.62	\$ 3,518,056.00
63-437	CATES HILL LANDFILL Total	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 7,200.00
65-490	BERLIN AIRPORT Total w/ Capital	\$ 196,480.00	\$ 549,074.00

Mayor Grenier commented that Other City Funds are matched by corresponding revenues and don't affect taxpayers. He advised Sewer Fund line item is affected by the sewer usage. He also commented that the Cates Hill Landfill line item is for closure monitoring expenses and the City is responsible for about 16% of the expenses.

Stuart Light of 213 High Street commented the Airport total line item tripled from last year. He feels if it's costing this much to run the Airport, it should be closed down.

Mayor Grenier responded the Airport Capital Improvement projects are 100% funded by the FAA. The increase in the FY23 total w/Capital includes the fencing lighting and signage project which is 100% funded by the FAA and is also reflected in the revenues. The City doesn't pay for this project, it is completely funded.

There being no further comments, Mayor Grenier declared the public hearing closed at 7:15pm.

Mayor Grenier thanked Ms. Laflamme for all her hard work in putting together the FY2023 budget. Even with not being familiar with the whole process, she jumped right into the role and did an incredible job. All while covering three jobs. The City is very fortunate to have Ms. Laflamme as such a dedicated employee.

Mayor Grenier also took the opportunity to introduce the new City Manager Mr. Phillip L. Warren Jr. He commented he has been in his position for three and a half weeks now and is settling well. He is very accessible and is all over the community getting involved. He is a welcome addition to our community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Rioux
Executive Assistant

*Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the City Council by motion.