

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://berlinc-t-gov.zoom.us/j/89475158570?pwd=hYMrflhxvxkbDNTmKoeZcu7lOkjFRK.1>

Meeting ID: 894 7515 8570

Passcode: 151264

+1-929-205-6099 # US (New York)

**TOWN OF BERLIN  
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
Tuesday, January 9, 2024  
Town Council Chambers (in person)  
Remote Meeting  
7:00 P.M.**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Kaczynski called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**C. ROLL CALL:**

Those in attendance were:

Councilor Kate Atkinson
Councilor Sandra Coppola
Mayor Mark Kaczynski
Councilor Charles Paonessa
Councilor Mark Pruzin
Councilor Peter Rosso
Councilor Donna Veach

Also in attendance:

Town Manager Arosha Jayawickrema
Corporation Counsel Jeffrey Donofrio

**D. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:**

*Peter Daddeo, 156 Farmington Ave, Rocky Hill* – Mr. Daddeo stated that he represents BT 2008 LLC which owns property at 404 Berlin Turnpike in Berlin. He was hoping that the tax abatement item could be on tonight’s agenda.

*Rachel Dzienis, 106 Brandege Lane* – Ms. Dzienis stated that she is thankful for the support of various Town departments in addressing the issues that had been occurring on Brandege Lane which included speeding, illegal drug use, and other dangerous issues. There has been a major improvement to the area.

**E. MAYOR’S UPDATE:**

Mayor Kaczynski stated that once new appointments are made to the Town Council Sub-Committees this evening the Ordinance Committee will need to meet to discuss a broad noise ordinance for the Town.

**F. MEETING AGENDA – Immediately Following the Mayor’s Update**

**G. CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. **Topic re: Accept monetary donations totaling \$3,486.76 and deposit \$1,974.30 into the friends of the library miscellaneous account to be used to purchase child/teen program supplies, a child/teen program, an adult program, coffee supplies, 3 museum passes and children’s board books and deposit \$1,193.73 into the children’s donation account for the purchase of Tonies audio devices and characters and children’s books and programs and deposit \$318.73 into the library agency account for the purchase of books and materials and the libraries greatest need. Also accept the donation of two used Keurig’s with an approximate value of \$90.00 to be utilized in the meeting room and meeting room kitchen. Berlin-Peck Memorial Library**
2. **Topic re: Approve waiving the Police Traffic Control fees in the estimated amount of \$ 1,675.00 for the Jim Day Memorial Tournament that will take place on January 14, 2024. - Police**
3. **Topic re: Accept the donations of \$2,561.67 and appropriate the funds to the Supplies Expenditure Account. - Police**
4. **Topic re: Accept the donations of \$1,500 and appropriate the funds to the Police K9 Program Expenditure Account. - Police**
5. **Topic re: Approve waiving the Par For the Course January per diam rate of \$160 for Mary E. Griswold holiday gathering. – Golf Course**
6. **Topic re: Approve waiving the Police fees in the estimated amount of \$310.80 for the Willard Elementary School dance that will take place on Friday, February 23, 2024. – Police**

Councilor Paonessa moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**H. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Topic re: Approve a non-budgeted appropriation of \$509,000 from the Municipal Revenue Sharing account to the Vehicle Reserve account, both in the General Fund, pending approval by the Board of Finance. – Finance**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that this item was the subject of tonight’s Special Town Meeting.

Councilor Paonessa moved to approve a non-budgeted appropriation of \$509,000 from the Municipal Revenue Sharing account to the Vehicle Reserve account, both in the General Fund, pending approval by the Board of Finance.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

## **2. Topic re: Discussion of Tax Sales – Mayor**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that at the Mayor's request this item was added to the agenda and the Town Manager asked Corporation Counsel Donofrio to provide an overview of the tax sale process.

Corporation Counsel Donofrio stated that Connecticut allows for two forms of collection of taxes by foreclosing on property. The first is a judicial foreclosure process which involves bringing a case to Superior Court starting a foreclosure in the name of the town and filing a lis pendens on the land records. These cases typically result in a strict foreclosure or more likely foreclosure by sale.

The second form is a tax sale which does not involve the courts. The town sends a notice to the taxpayer demanding payment of delinquent taxes and when those taxes are not paid there is a series of notices which include publishing in a newspaper, posting outside or inside of the tax office, and mailing to the affected persons which include the taxpayer and other subsequent lien holders on the property.

Typically, the notice process begins 9 – 12 weeks before the tax sale is going to occur and there is a series of three notices with the last being published and sent 2 – 4 weeks prior to the sale. The sale is a public auction, and the property is sold to the highest bidder. The town can also bid on the property if no one else bids or if the bids are less than the taxes owed.

Within two weeks of the tax sale a deed to the purchaser is executed, and within 60 days of the sale date the town must publish and mail a notice to the taxpayer and lien holders communicating the information concerning the sale and the redemption period, which is six months from the date of the sale. The deed is held by the Town Clerk during that six-month period.

During this six-month redemption period the taxpayer can pay all sums owed to the town which includes the taxes on the property subject to the tax sale as well as any other taxes owed on any real property, personal property, or motor vehicles, legal fees, expenses, and interest.

If redemption occurs the Town Clerk will return the unrecorded deed to the Tax Collector within ten days of receipt of payment. The Tax Collector will certify cancellation of the sale and the purchaser receives their money back with interest.

Councilor Paonessa inquired who decides when it is time to have a tax sale and is prior negotiation by a purchaser allowed. Corporation Counsel Donofrio stated that the tax collector has statutory authority to determine when a tax sale is needed, and prior negotiations are not allowed.

Councilor Paonessa stated that he was a prospective purchaser of a tax sale property in town which also involved the Kensington Fire District that did not appear to follow the rules regarding prior negotiations and asked Corporation Counsel how that can be. Corporation Counsel Donofrio stated he was not involved in the sale and the attorney handling the sale should be contacted. Attorney Adam Cohen handles the Town's tax sales.

Councilor Paonessa added that he brings this up because he does not want this to happen again and believes the Town should be transparent.

Corporation Counsel Donofrio asked Councilor Paonessa to provide him with a list of questions regarding this sale and he would reach out to Attorney Cohen.

NO ACTION NEEDED

**3. Topic re: Authorize the Town Manager to hire H.D. Segur Insurance of Wallingford, CT as the Broker of Record for the Town of Berlin's Liability-Auto-Property and Worker's Compensation insurance policies. – Finance**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that this item is to request an insurance broker for the Town's liability, auto, property, and worker's compensation insurance.

Currently insurance is purchased through CIRMA which is about \$1.3 million in total. The Finance Director and the Town's risk manager worked with the broker to determine what other towns pay and it is believed that the Town will be able to save close to six figures going through a broker and negotiating prices.

An RFP was created, and three bids were received with H.D. Segur Insurance being the lowest bidder.

Councilor Paonessa moved to authorize the Town Manager to hire H.D. Segur Insurance of Wallingford, CT as the Broker of Record for the Town of Berlin's Liability-Auto-Property and Worker's Compensation insurance policies.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**4. Topic re: Discussion concerning Early Voting - Registrars of Voters/Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Kate Wall stated that early voting will begin this year with the Presidential Preference Primary. Early voting will begin on March 26<sup>th</sup> with no early voting being held on Good Friday or Easter. If there is a State Primary held on August 13<sup>th</sup> early voting would be held August 5<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>. Early voting for the November 5<sup>th</sup> Presidential Election will be held the two weeks prior to the election. The hours for early voting will mostly be held between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. except for a limited number of days with extended hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Corporation Counsel added that one nuance regarding early voting and same day voter registration is that there is a 24-hour waiting period between registering during that period and voting.

Town Clerk Wall added that the Berlin Registrars of Voters work well together and will support each other during this new process. Ms. Wall stated that she will also support the Registrars and work with them to make things run as smoothly as possible.

Republican Registrar of Voters Joan Veley expressed her thanks to the Town Clerk as well as Democratic Registrar of Voters Christy Miano and added that the job will get done correctly and accurately.

NO ACTION NEEDED

**Motion to move Items 15 & 16 up on the agenda.**

Councilor Paonessa moved to move up agenda items 15 and 16.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**15. Topic re: Amend the Berlin Tax Abatement Policy to add an additional level of tax abatement, add mixed use as an eligible activity under the policy as well as add language giving the Town Council the discretion to request a minimum of 10% of all apartments be affordable at this \$25,000,000 level – Economic Development**

Economic Development Director Chris Edge stated that the Town of Berlin's Tax Abatement Policy has been in effect since 2013 with modifications made over the years.

This new amendment will add a new level of tax abatement if a firm or developer spends a minimum of \$25,000,000 on an eligible project. This new level of tax abatement includes a 10-year tax abatement on both the commercial and residential portions of the project. In addition, it adds back in mixed use as an eligible activity. With a project of this size, the 10 years for each makes sense for the project to be viable due to the cost of building materials and rising interest rates. Mr. Edge added that all tax abatements are on new investment only.

Mayor Kaczynski explained that what the Economic Development Commission changed with this policy is put it more in line with the existing policy while adding the \$25 million investment and adding ten years for residential when it was previously five years. The numbers were adjusted with what already exists.

Councilor Paonessa moved to amend the Berlin Tax Abatement Policy to add an additional level of tax abatement, add mixed use as an eligible activity under the policy, as well as add language giving the Town Council the discretion to request a minimum of 10% of all apartments be affordable at this \$25,000,000 level.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**16. Topic re: Approve a tax abatement for BT 2008 LLC for their mixed-use project at 404 Berlin Turnpike. The abatement schedule for the residential portion of the project will be for 10 years at 70% in years 1 and 2, 60% in years 3 and 4, and 50% in years 5 through 7, 40% in year 8, 30% in year 9 and 20% in year 10. The abatement schedule for the commercial portion of the project will be for 10 years at 70% for years 1 through 3, 60% for years 4 through 8, and 50% for years 9 and 10 per the town's tax abatement policy. – Economic Development**

Economic Development Director Edge stated that BT 2008 LLC is in the beginning phase of constructing a mixed-use project at 404 Berlin Turnpike that will include 200 apartments (20% affordable), a gas station, retail building, and hotel.

Based upon the Town's newly adopted Tax Abatement policy approved in the previous agenda item, with a planned investment of over \$25,000,000, BT 2008 LLC is requesting it qualify for the amended policy. The Economic Development Commission recommends that the Town Council approve this item.

After discussion regarding the wording of this agenda item Corporation Counsel Donofrio suggested that the motion first be amended to conform with the newly adopted tax abatement policy.

Councilor Paonessa moved to amend the motion to conform with the newly adopted tax abatement policy.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Councilor Paonessa moved to approve a tax abatement for BT 2008 LLC for their mixed-use project at 404 Berlin Turnpike. The abatement schedule will conform with the newly adopted policy.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**5. Topic re: Discussion of Board of Education Budget – Mayor**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that this item was placed on tonight's agenda at the request of Mayor Kaczynski. Board of Education (BOE) Superintendent Brian Benigni was informed of this item who in turn informed BOE President Julia Dennis. Ms. Dennis responded to the Council via email and hard copies of that email were provided to Council members this evening.

Mayor Kaczynski explained that there had been communication between the BOE and the Board of Finance (BOF). The BOF had requested information from the BOE regarding the chart the BOE provided to the public during the past budget session stating the tiered cuts that were going to be made if they did not receive their requested budget increase of 5.84%.

The BOE received a 3.6% budget increase and therefore the BOF asked the BOE if they followed through with the chart of cuts that they told the voters they were going to need to do.

Mayor Kaczynski stated that Ms. Dennis' email response stated that the Town does not have the authority to tell the BOE how to spend their budget. Mayor Kaczynski stated that the Town is not asking the BOE for that information they are only asking the BOE to state if they followed through on the cuts.

Corporation Counsel Donofrio confirmed that there is nothing statutorily that prevents the governing body of a town from asking how BOE money was spent.

No BOE members were present at tonight's meeting. The Town Manager will reach out to Superintendent Benigni and BOE President Dennis and ask them to address this at a future Town Council meeting.

Councilor Atkinson stated that she feels it is inappropriate to hold someone to a document that is by way of example in the budgetary process. Mayor Kaczynski stated that the document stated that the cuts would occur not that they could occur, and if they are putting that representation out to the public, they should be able to answer if those cuts did in fact occur.

When asked by Mayor Kaczynski if he wanted to speak on the matter, BOE member Peter Zarabozo stated that per their bylaws the BOE spokesperson is the President therefore he did not want to speak for her.

NO ACTION NEEDED

- 6. Topic re: Approve issuing a purchase order to Robert H. Lord Co. in the amount of \$59,000 for children's shelving and meeting room tables. The library receives discounted pricing through the Connecticut Library Consortium however we received the best pricing through the state contract # 15PSX0041. – Berlin-Peck Memorial Library**

Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Director Kim McNally stated that tables in the Blanche Delaney Room and shelving in the Children's Department are original to the library, in poor condition, and need to be replaced. Funding was previously approved however due to price increases in the past six months additional funding from donations will also be used for the purchase.

Councilor Paonessa moved to approve issuing a purchase order to Robert H. Lord Co. in the amount of \$59,000 for children's shelving and meeting room tables. The library receives discounted pricing through the Connecticut Library Consortium however we received the best pricing through the state contract # 15PSX0041.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**7. Topic re: Presentation of the Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Strategic Plan to the Town Council. – Berlin-Peck Memorial Library**

Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Director McNally stated that a strategic plan is important to help an organization guide their work, provide a framework for success, and in the case of a library to know if the needs of the community are being met.

As part of the process the library participated in a cohort of seven libraries around the state which shared a consulting to assist in creating this plan. The Berlin-Peck Memorial Library formed a staff-led committee to guide the work, survey the community, and solicit idea boards in the Library and Town Hall. Over 400 responses to the survey were received and what they learned was that there is a high level of satisfaction with the programs and services offered by the library but there are opportunities for improvement.

Ms. McNally stated that the Mission, Vision, and Values of the library were developed. The values are intellectual freedom, connection and collaboration, exceptional service, curiosity and discovery, and providing a welcoming place.

Adult Services Librarian Anne Henriques explained that in the process of defining the Library's values and analyzing the survey responses they identified some important themes which became the four priorities that they will be focusing on over the next three years. Those priorities are engaging community, supporting literacy, fostering connection in a divided world, and enriching lives through the arts and culture.

At the conclusion of the presentation Town Manager Jayawickrema informed the Town Council that Ms. McNally would be leaving the Town of Berlin to take on an amazing opportunity as the CEO and President of the New Canann Library. All wished her well with her new endeavor.

NO ACTION NEEDED

**8. Topic re: Authorize the Town Manager to apply for the State of Connecticut LoCIP Grant for \$302,000 for the removal and replacement of the bridges at Timberlin Golf Course and appropriate the funds into the LoCIP – Timberlin Bridge Replacement Project Account Pending OPM approval. – Golf Course**

Town Manager Jayawickrema introduced this item stating that the Director of Golf and the Golf Commission are requesting that the Town Manager be authorized to apply for the LoCIP Grant which, along with about \$50,000 in the capital fund, would be used to remove and replace seven bridges located on the courses at Timberlin Golf Course.

Director of Golf Sol Guerrero added that they are excited to get the project started.

Councilor Paonessa moved to authorize the Town Manager to apply for the State of Connecticut LoCIP Grant for \$302,000 for the removal and replacement of the bridges at Timberlin Golf Course and appropriate the funds into the LoCIP – Timberlin Bridge Replacement Project Account Pending OPM approval.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.



Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**9. Topic re: Award Contract #2024-08 - Routine Repairs and Minor Emergency Sewer Services, including sewer pump stations, to Drain Doctor, Inc. of Berlin, for service use by Water Control and other departments on a Town-wide basis. – Water Control**

Water Control Manager Ray Jarema stated that the Town went out to bid for a contractor to perform routine and emergency repairs and minor construction within the Water Control jurisdiction. Three bids were received and Drain Doctor, Inc was determined to be the lowest bidder. This is a two-year agreement.

Councilor Paonessa moved to award Contract #2024-08 - Routine Repairs and Minor Emergency Sewer Services, including sewer pump stations, to Drain Doctor, Inc. of Berlin, for service use by Water Control and other departments on a Town-wide basis.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**10. Topic re: Approve and pay Bigelow Electric for “Emergency Services” performed at the Berlin Turnpike Sewage Pump Station in the amount of \$36,340.00. – Water Control**

Water Control Manager Jarema explained that in early November the electrical panel at the Berlin Turnpike Sewer Pump Station shorted out due to mice damage and the station was then operated by the on-site generator while Bigelow Electric located an electrical panel acceptable to Eversource.

The generator, which was previously test-run for two hours every week, failed after being in use for two weeks while the replacement panel was being located. A rented generator was then put into place until the new panel could finally be installed by Bigelow.

Councilor Paonessa moved to approve and pay Bigelow Electric for “Emergency Services” performed at the Berlin Turnpike Sewage Pump Station in the amount of \$36,340.00.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**11. Topic re: Approve the purchase of Holmatro rescue tools from Municipal Equipment Specialist utilizing a NPPGov contract # PS20035 for an amount not to exceed \$58,692 which includes a 5% contingency. – Fire Administration**

Fire Administrator Jim Simons stated that this request is to replace a portion of its hydraulic rescue equipment commonly known as the Jaws of Life which is over 25 years old and no longer serviceable if it fails.

The new tools will be deployed from the primary fire engine that responds to motor vehicle accidents along the Berlin Turnpike. Mr. Simons added that the State reimburses the department for

calls on the Turnpike and the funds received for the 120 calls they responded to will be used to cover the cost of this equipment.

Councilor Pruzin inquired about the rescue equipment available at the other fire departments in town. Mr. Simons stated that they will be looking to replace that equipment in the near future as well.

Councilor Paonessa moved to approve the purchase of Holmatro rescue tools from Municipal Equipment Specialist utilizing a NPPGov contract # PS20035 for an amount not to exceed \$58,692 which includes a 5% contingency.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**12. Topic re: Waive the Town of Berlin’s purchasing requirements to contract for medical services for the Town of Berlin Fire Department with Hartford Healthcare Occupational Health in Plainville CT, as this is in the best interest of Town. – Fire Administration**

Fire Administrator Simons stated that Town of Berlin firefighters require annual physicals to determine their health and ability to wear breathing respirators. In the past the firefighters used different medical facilities which provided for inconsistencies.

Three area providers were researched: Priority Urgent Care, Hartford Healthcare, and Middlesex Hospital Occupational Health. It was determined that Hartford Healthcare in Plainville provided the services needed at the lowest cost. Mr. Simons added that there is no State contract for these services, and he did not go out to bid in order to keep the option of providing a local provider for the firefighters.

Councilor Paonessa moved to waive the Town of Berlin’s purchasing requirements to contract for medical services for the Town of Berlin Fire Department with Hartford Healthcare Occupational Health in Plainville CT, as this is in the best interest of the Town.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**13. Topic re: Set a special town meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 6:45 pm to approve a non-budgeted appropriation of \$318,333 from the Unappropriated Fund Balance to the account to the Grant Match account for the purposes of providing matching funding and funds for preparation of grant applications. – Economic Development**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that at the December 12, 2023 Town Council meeting he had initiated a discussion regarding appropriating funds for use as matching grant funds. The Town Council asked the Town Manager to prepare a specific funding proposal that would outline the grant applications that are anticipated to be filed and the required match or investment needed.

Town Manager Jayawickrema asked Economic Development Coordinator Jim Mahoney to provide a brief overview of the available grants.

Mr. Mahoney stated that the STEAP 2024 grant is expected to be available in late spring or early summer. This grant does not require a specific grant match, but a 20% match is preferred. The maximum grant amount is \$500,000 making the grant match \$100,000. One idea for the grant application includes the East Berlin pool project which the Town Council has been discussing. The feasibility study for this project is estimated at \$25,000.

The Recreational Trails Grant, which was applied for in 2023 but not received, and they are looking to apply again in 2024 with the Pistol Creek Lamentation Mountain area. The estimated cost of the Berlin portion of the project is \$300,000 and a 20% match is required (\$60,000). The application for this grant is due on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Town recently received a \$780,000 Connectivity Grant to fund sidewalks. Mr. Mahoney believes that part of the reason the grant was received was because completed plans were available for all proposed sidewalk segments. He would like to plan for the next section of sidewalks along Kensington Road, from Carriage Drive to Norton Road. The estimated cost for preparation of design plans is \$75,000. The Town has received multiple Connectivity Grants in the past.

The RAISE Grant program is a Federal infrastructure program. CRCOG has suggested applying for a grant to study pedestrian safety and mobility improvements along the Berlin Turnpike in the towns of Wethersfield, Newington, and Berlin. Berlin's matching fund contribution would be \$33,333. Economic Development Director Chris Edge added that looking at the intersections of the Berlin Turnpike with Deming Road as well as Woodlawn Road would be the biggest pieces due to the developments occurring in those areas but added the entire Turnpike in the named towns would be studied.

The cumulative grant matching funds for these future grants is \$318,333. Mr. Mahoney stated that they looked at what other alternatives might be available for funding part of these items. Options include Parks and Recreation funding \$25,000 for the East Berlin pool feasibility study, the Payment in Lieu of Open Space account balance of \$58,000 which would cover the 20% Recreational Grant match, funding the Connectivity Grant with the Road and Bridge account, and appropriating funds for the RAISE Grant program.

Mr. Mahoney added that an item that was not a part of his agenda summary is design changes that have had to be made by Newport Realty at the Steel Boulevard project due to subsurface conditions. The contingency account will be tapped out and need to be refilled. The Town has asked the DECD for additional monies and a formal grant application may need to be made which would include an additional \$50,000 grant match from the Town.

Mr. Mahoney added that if the Town was looking to fund all the items mentioned with the alternate scenario it would bring the total down to \$108,333 that they would be looking to fund now. The others would be looked at in the next fiscal year.

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that the East Berlin pool feasibility study can be done in the current fiscal year as there is money in the Parks and Recreation budget since the pool will not be opening this summer. If the project match is not funded now it will need to be added into the fiscal year 2025 budget otherwise the Town will not receive the funding.

He added that there is an Aquatic Invasive Species Grant available with a deadline of January 31<sup>st</sup> which requires a 25% local match or \$25,000. Residents of Silver Lake are concerned about the weed situation.

The Town Manager stated that he is fine with using the Payment in Lieu of Open Space account to cover the Recreational Trails Grant match. Funding the Connectivity Grant match with \$75,000 from the Roads and Bridges account will mean less paving will be done this summer. He added that he believes that participating in the RAISE grant program will provide the opportunity to work with CROCOG and tap into a larger resource by allocating \$33,333.

Regarding the Newport/Steele Boulevard project that Mr. Mahoney mentioned, as much as we want to obtain grant funding the Town should prepare in case emergency funding is needed for remediation.

Therefore the \$25,000 for the invasive aquatic species, \$33,333 for the Berlin Turnpike study, and \$50,000 for Steele Boulevard totals the \$108,333 Mr. Mahoney mentioned above. In terms of time sensitivity, the Aquatic Invasive Species Grant is due January 31<sup>st</sup>, the RAISE grant application is due February 28<sup>th</sup> and CROCOG will need to know if Berlin will be participating.

Councilor Veach stated that she had several questions on the Recreational Trails Grant as this was looked at last year and there was considerable pushback from the community. Mr. Mahoney stated that one area of concern was the connector trail between Atkins Street and the Stantack Road right of way in Middletown. Middletown removed that from the current application. In Berlin the funds would be used to repave the Pistol Creek cart paths and improve accessibility features as well as the connection between Pistol Creek and the Mattabassett Trail Head on Spruce Brook Road. Concerns of neighbors were responded to, and the Conservation Commission will be holding a public hearing at their next meeting in February and Mr. Mahoney will return to the Town Council with further feedback before the application is submitted.

Councilor Veach stated she does not want to vote on the Recreational Grant portion of this agenda item this evening as she needs additional information. Mr. Mahoney stated that the next agenda item pertains to the Pistol Creek area and this agenda item refers to identifying if there was a source for matching funds for the grant.

Councilor Coppola stated that she has concerns with using \$75,000 from the Roads and Bridges account to fund the Connectivity Grant. Town Manager Jayawickrema then added that amount into the \$108,333 previously mentioned bringing the total grant match appropriation request to \$183,333.

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that if all agree with the appropriation request amount that this agenda item is to set a special town meeting to approve the non-budgeted appropriation.

Councilor Paonessa moved to set a special town meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 6:45 pm to approve a non-budgeted appropriation of \$183,333 from the Unappropriated Fund Balance to the Grant Match account for the purposes of providing matching funding and funds for preparation of grant applications.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**14. Topic re: Discussion about Participation in a Recreational Trails Grant Application with the City of Middletown for the Lamentation Mountain/Pistol Creek Area. – Economic Development**

Town Manager Jayawickrema stated that as there was a small discussion on this item during the previous agenda item Mr. Mahoney will return to Town Council with more information at a February Town Council meeting.

NO ACTION TAKEN

**15. Topic re: Move to amend the Berlin Tax Abatement Policy to add an additional level of tax abatement, add mixed use as an eligible activity under the policy as well as add language giving the Town Council the discretion to request a minimum of 10% of all apartments be affordable at this \$25,000,000 level. – Economic Development**

Item moved up on the agenda.

**16. Topic re: Approve a tax abatement for BT 2008 LLC for their mixed-use project at 404 Berlin Turnpike. The abatement schedule for the residential portion of the project will be for 10 years at 70% in years 1 and 2, 60% in years 3 and 4, and 50% in years 5 through 7, 40% in year 8, 30% in year 9 and 20% in year 10. The abatement schedule for the commercial portion of the project will be for 10 years at 70% for years 1 through 3, 60% for years 4 through 8, and 50% for years 9 and 10 per the town's tax abatement policy. – Economic Development**

Item moved up on the agenda.

**17. Topic re: Appointment of Town Council members to Sub-Committees**

Standing Committees:

- Ordinance Committee (3-5 members) – Reviews and recommends ordinances for adoption by Town Council
- Rules and Procedures Committee (2-3 members) – Reviews and recommends Rules and Procedures for the Town Council

Other Committees:

- Fire Services (1-2 members) – This subcommittee is a combination of the “Committee to Oversee the “Robert Wolf Incentive Plan”; “Fire Strategic Committee”; and the “Fireman’s Incentive Plan Committee”.
- Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (1 member) – Usually the Mayor will serve on this committee.
- Playing Fields Committee (2-4 members) – Update on the condition of the fields.
- Community Conversations (1-2 members) – This is a nationwide program where school, community members, and organizations come together to address pressing issues facing students, educators, and public education.
- Manager’s Evaluation (7 members) – All seven councilors would be on this committee.
- Meeting House (1-2 member(s)) – Show support for the Meeting House.
- Mattabessett Watershed (1 member) – Review the flooding near the municipal complex possibly work with Berlin Land Trust
- Calendar (1 member) – Develop the calendar for Town Council meetings.

Town Clerk Kate Wall reviewed the current committees and provided the Council members with the list of current members of each committee.

Ordinance Committee – The current members stated they will remain, and Councilor Atkinson stated she would join the committee.

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Mayor Kaczynski, and Councilors Atkinson, Coppola, Paonessa, and Rosso to the Ordinance Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Rules and Procedures Committee - The current members stated they will remain, and Councilor Pruzin stated he would join the committee.

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Councilors Paonessa, Pruzin, and Veach to the Rules and Procedures Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Fire Services Committee –

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Councilors Paonessa, Pruzin, Rosso, and Veach to the Fire Services Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) –

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Mayor Kaczynski to the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM).

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Playing Fields Committee –

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Councilors Atkinson, Coppola, Rosso, Veach to the Playing Fields Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Community Conversations Committee – Town Clerk Kate Wall stated that this is nationwide program where school committee members and organizations come together to address pressing issues facing the students, educators, and public education. This committee has never met.

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Mayor Kaczynski and Councilor Pruzin to the Community Conversations Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Manager's Evaluation Committee –

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint all Town Council members to the Manager's Evaluation Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Meeting House Committee –

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Councilors Atkinson and Veach to the Meeting House Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Mattabassett Watershed Committee –

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Councilor Paonessa to the Mattabassett Watershed Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Calendar Committee –

Councilor Paonessa moved to appoint Councilor Coppola to the Calendar Committee.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**I. APPOINTMENTS:**

1. **Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Board** – Donna Moore (D) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
2. **Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Board** – Lilian Ulan (U) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
3. **Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Board** – Chris Fasciano (R) term expires January 31, 2024. He is not seeking reappointment. Replacement term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
4. **Board of Ethics – Vacancy** – Susan Bordonaro (R) has resigned. Term would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
5. **Central Regional Tourism District Inc.** – Kate Wall term expired on December 31, 2023. Replacement or reappointment term would be until December 2026.
6. **Commission for the Aging** – C. Roger Moss (D) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
7. **Commission for the Aging** – Frank Slogeris (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.



8. **Commission for Persons with Disabilities – Vacancy** – Robert Dombrowski (D) has resigned. New term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
9. **Commission for Persons with Disabilities** – Wystan Ackerman (U) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
10. **Conservation Commission** – Guy Hoffman (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a R or U.
11. **Conservation Commission** – Mary Kathryn LaRose (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a R or U.
12. **Conservation Commission – Vacancy – Alternate** – Term would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
13. **Conservation Commission – Vacancy – Alternate** – Term would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U (Depending on the above appointment).
14. **Constables – 5 Vacancies** – Terms expired December 2023. New terms would be until December 2025. Can be filled with R, D or U with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6).
15. **Constables** – John Kozak (R) term expired December 2023. Replacement or reappointment term would be until December 2025. Can be filled with R, D or U with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6).
16. **Constables** – Brian Kurnik (R) term expired December 2023. Replacement or reappointment term would be until December 2025. Can be filled with R, D or U with no more than a bare majority to be from one political party (Section 8-6).
17. **Economic Development Commission** – Keith Bostrom (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
18. **Economic Development Commission** – Robert Sisti (U) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointment).
19. **Golf Course Commission – Vacancy** – Joe Pulcini (U) has resigned. New term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
20. **Golf Course Commission** – William Richards (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

21. **Golf Course Commission** – Peter DeFazio (U) term expires January 31, 2024. He is not seeking reappointment. Replacement term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointments).
22. **Historic District Commission** – Lorraine Stub (D) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
23. **Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission** – Michael Cassetta (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
24. **Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission** – Peter Nieman (D) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
25. **Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission** – John Russo Jr. (U) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointments).
26. **Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission – Vacancy – Alternate** – Replacement would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
27. **Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission – Vacancy – Alternate** – Replacement would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U. (Depending on the above appointment).
28. **Mattabassett District – Vacancy** – James Fallon (D) term expired August 31, 2023. Replacement term would be until September 1, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
29. **Parks and Recreation Commission – Vacancy** – Replacement would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
30. **Parks and Recreation Commission** – Gregory Starr (R) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointment).
31. **Parks and Recreation Commission** – Donna Bovee (U) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointments).
32. **Parks and Recreation Commission** – Lucas Van Zandt (R) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointments).

33. **Plainville Area Cable Television Advisory Council (PACTAC) – 2 Vacancies** – New terms would be until June 30, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U. There are only two members from Berlin for this board.
34. **Planning and Zoning Commission** – Diane Jorsey (U) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D or U.
35. **Planning and Zoning Commission** – Timothy Zigmont (D) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D or U.
36. **Planning and Zoning Commission – Vacancy – Alternate** – Nikki Sambitsky (R) has resigned. Replacement would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
37. **Planning and Zoning Commission – Alternate** – John Diakun (R) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
38. **Public Building Commission – Vacancy** – James Ouellette (D) term expired on January 31, 2023. Replacement would be until January 31, 2028. Can be filled with a R, D or U.
39. **Public Building Commission** – Thomas Reid (U) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointment).
40. **Public Building Commission** – Thomas Salimeno (D) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointments).
41. **Veterans’ Commission** – Charles Colaresi (D) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
42. **Veterans’ Commission** – Adam Revoir (U) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
43. **Veterans’ Commission** – Thomas Uznanski (R) term expires on January 31, 2024. He is not seeking reappointment. Replacement term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U (depending on the above appointment).
44. **VNA – Vacancy** – Replacement would be until January 31, 2025. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
45. **VNA – Vacancy** – Replacement would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

46. **VNA – Vacancy** –Replacement would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
47. **VNA – Vacancy** –Replacement would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
48. **VNA** – Cynthia Costa (R) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
49. **VNA** – Emily Jensen (D) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
50. **VNA** – Cyndi McKinnon (D) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
51. **VNA** – Cara Status (R) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
52. **Water Control Commission** – Barry Fairwood (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
53. **Water Control Commission** – Alvaro Garcia Jr. (U) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
54. **Water Control Commission** – Thomas Lasker (R) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
55. **Water Control Commission – Alternate – Vacancy** -Term would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
56. **Water Control Commission – Alternate – Vacancy** – Term would be until January 31, 2026. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
57. **Water Control Commission – Alternate – Vacancy** – New term would be until January 31, 2027. Can be filled with a D, R or U (Depending on the above two appointments).
58. **Youth Services Advisory Board** – Cyndi McKinnon (Service Consumer) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2027.
59. **Zoning Board of Appeals** – Leonard Tubbs (U) term expires January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.
60. **Zoning Board of Appeals – Alternate** – Michael Simonetta (R) term expires on January 31, 2024. Replacement or reappointment term would be until January 31, 2029. Can be filled with a D, R or U.

Town Clerk Kate Wall stated that this information will be provided again, and appointments made at the January 23<sup>rd</sup> Town Council meeting. She suggested that Council members encourage their Town Committees to view the different board and commission information that is available on the Town's website. Applications for appointments should be returned to the Town Clerk's office.

**J. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:**

- A Zero Tolerance Policy was distributed to employees who have been asked to return a signed copy acknowledging receipt.
- The Police Department Pension Committee met in November 2023 to get the statement of investment policy. All funds from the defined contribution plan have been moved to the new defined benefit plan. The group managing the funds reviewed the statement of investment policy and parameters have been set for investments. The goal is to obtain growth of 6% - 6.5%.
- The Town has received a few complaints of noise and smells coming from Bright Feeds on Fuller Way. The company is aware, and they have been very responsive. They are working to install noise mitigating devices and working with the State. The Town Manager will return with updates when available.
- Police Department renovations are scheduled to begin on Tuesday January 16<sup>th</sup>. Construction set up area will be located at the rear entrance of the Town Hall therefore the food pantry distribution has been moved from that area to the front entrance of the building.
- The Town Manager, Finance Director, and the VNA Administrator visited the Westbrook VNA to understand how they operate as Berlin's VNA has continually lost money while Westbrook has broken even. It was determined that Westbrook does not include employee benefits as part of the VNA costs, they also have one office staff member along with the director, and they do not oversee school nurses.
- The generator that the Town is donating to the Housing Authority for the senior housing complex is ready to go but there has been little movement from the Housing Authority to pick it up.
- The Town Manager stated he would like to schedule an Ordinance Committee meeting. Topics to be discussed include creating an ordinance to fund the Police pension, noise, and ATVs. The meeting will be held on Tuesday February 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.
- The four-day summer work week pilot program was briefly discussed. The Town Manager stated that a handful of employees were not in favor of the idea, and he asked employees to share specific individual issues with the Human Resources Director. The Town Manager will provide more detailed information at a future meeting.

**K. SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None

**L. COUNCILORS' COMMUNICATION:**

Councilor Veach stated that today is National Law Enforcement Day. She thanked the Town of Berlin officers for their hard work in keeping our community safe.

Councilor Pruzin stated that he attended the seminar on Saturday for newly elected officials. Municipal government, finance, ethics, and conflict of interest forums were held and about 60 people attended, and it was very informative.

Councilor Rosso commended Public Works for the great job they did keeping the streets plowed during the weekend snowstorm.

**M. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:**

**December 12, 2023**

Councilor Paonessa moved to accept the Town Council Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2023 as presented.

Seconded by Councilor Veach.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

**N. ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilor Paonessa moved to adjourn the Town Council meeting at 10:19 p.m.

Seconded by Councilor Rosso.

Vote being 7-0 (MOTION CARRIED)

Submitted by,

Kathryn J. Wall  
Clerk of the Meeting

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
BERLIN TOWN CLERK

2024 JAN 16 AM 11:20

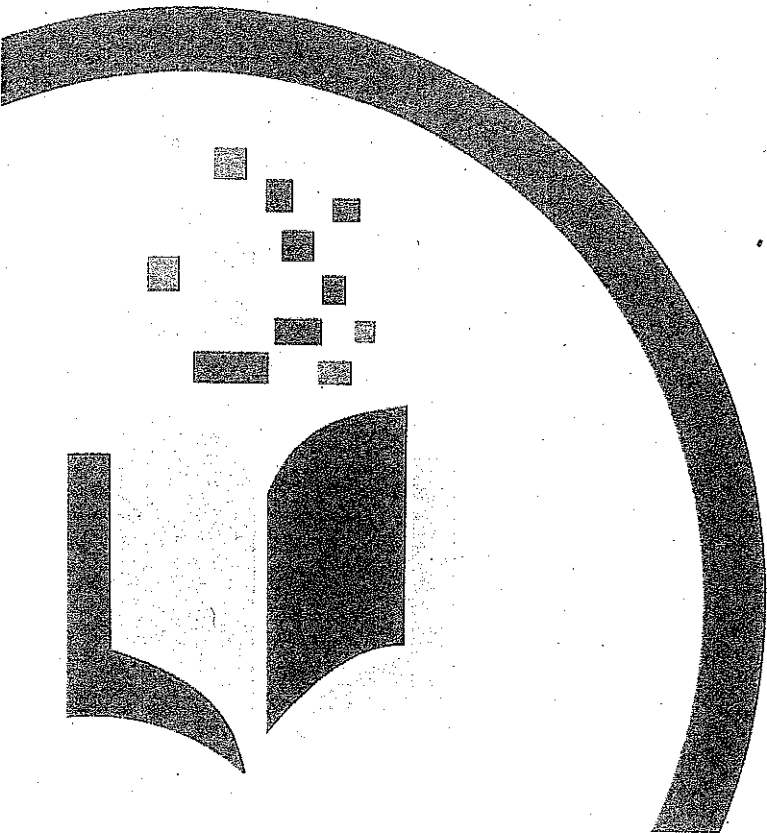
*Kathryn J. Wall*

BERLIN, CT.

Item #7

234 Kensington Road  
Berlin, Connecticut  
berlinpeck.org  
860-828-7125

# Berlin-Peck Memorial Library strategic plan 2024-2026



# a note from the director

Dear Berlin Community Members and Library Patrons,

When I began in this role in 2021, I knew I wanted the library to develop a strategic plan. Planning takes time and requires resources, effort, collaboration, and most importantly feedback from you, our users. I'm thrilled to present to you Berlin-Peck Memorial Library's Strategic Plan 2024-2026.

---

As members of the library community, your input and ideas were a vital part of this process. Thank you so much for sharing your feedback on our programs and services, spaces, staff, and collection. We embarked on this process as part of a cohort of seven libraries around the state of Connecticut all working on a strategic plan. You may not realize how costly strategic planning can be. By working in a cohort sponsored by the Connecticut Library Consortium as well as Maureen Sullivan and Associates guiding us every step, we were able to make this strategic plan a reality. The best part is that we supported one another, as libraries often do, and we learned from each other.

For our part, Berlin-Peck formed a staff-led committee and heard from 486 people through our community survey, four community conversations, and two idea boards. We learned there is a high level of satisfaction with our programs and services, you appreciate our welcoming and warm environment, and you want more of what we're doing—more programs, more opportunities to gather, more live performances, more partnering with our local schools, and more fun!

While feedback was generally positive, we identified opportunities to improve our services. We learned that some people don't know about what we offer. Therefore, we can do a better job in getting information about our programs to our patrons and community. You want a space to create and explore with technology. We hear you! You asked for more resources for English language learners and more opportunities to be together across generations. You will find all of this in our plan.

Your input was valuable in formulating our priorities for the next three years:

- Engaging Community
- Supporting Literacy
- Fostering Connection in a Divided World
- Enriching Lives Through the Arts and Culture

All of our work will be guided by these priorities. I invite you to look at these in more detail on the following pages. Again, thank you for your participation and feedback that allowed us to focus our efforts on critical areas—what matters to you. Thank you to all our users, supporters, donors, patrons, the Berlin Town Council, Friends of the Berlin Peck Library, the Library Board, and our dedicated staff for their work on this process. I'm so proud of what we accomplished, and I look forward to what the next three years will bring.

Warmly,



Kimberly McNally, Library Director  
kmcnally@berlinpeck.org



## mission

Every day, the Berlin-Peck Memorial Library strengthens individuals and builds community through universal access to information, opportunities, ideas, and understanding.

## vision

To be the heart of an engaged, informed, and vibrant community.

## values

### intellectual freedom

We uphold the right to privacy and provide free and open access to materials and resources that reflect diverse points of view.

### connection and collaboration

We foster connections between people through collaboration with our community, believing that personal connections are vital for the well-being of individuals and our society.

### exceptional service

We care about the people we serve and support each other in providing compassionate, trustworthy, and individualized service.

### curiosity and discovery

We affirm that people need to learn at every age, pursue their interests, and explore new possibilities. We approach our work with curiosity and embrace the future while honoring our past.

### a welcoming place

We welcome you as you are.



Albina Romanski,  
Berlin resident and  
Berlin-Peck regular

# priorities and goals

We are committed to creating a space that welcomes and respects the uniqueness and diversity of all people.

## engaging community

Reaching our community means being known as a trustworthy partner, providing an open door to new opportunities, and offering experiences outside of library walls.

### Goals:

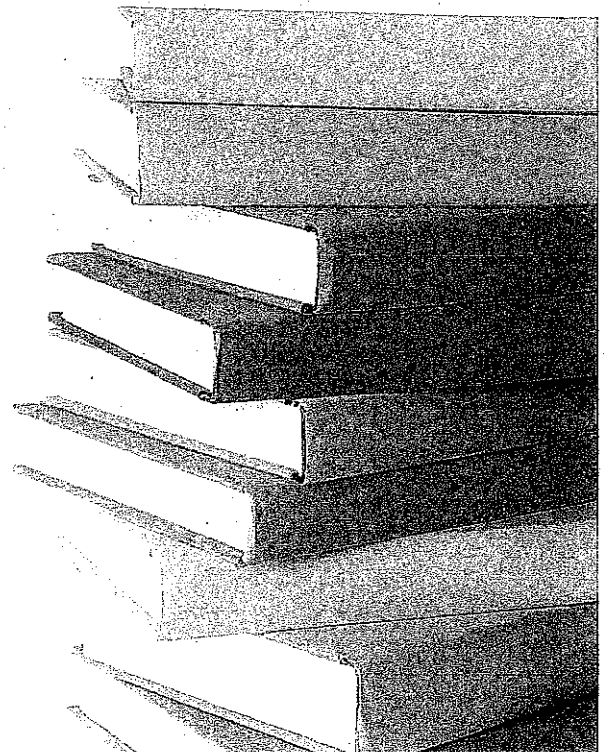
- Strengthen partnerships with schools, local organizations, and town services and increase the library's presence in the community
- Develop and implement a marketing plan
- Expand current programs and explore new offerings and timing of programs for multigenerational groups, teens, young professionals, working families, and neurodiverse individuals

## supporting literacy

Literacy takes many forms: from our ability to read to managing finances, from determining if information is true and valid to navigating the internet, from learning a new language to finding books on library shelves.

### Goals:

- Provide digital literacy, information literacy, and technology instruction classes
- Implement programs that support best practices for preparing children to enter school
- Support the personal pursuit and exchange of knowledge and ideas
- Increase opportunities for English language learners
- Provide dedicated exam study hours during Berlin High School midterm and finals weeks
- Create videos for technology instruction



## fostering connection in a divided world

We do not need to agree in order to connect. Understanding is what brings us together, and the library is a place where understanding of people and experiences can begin.

### Goals:

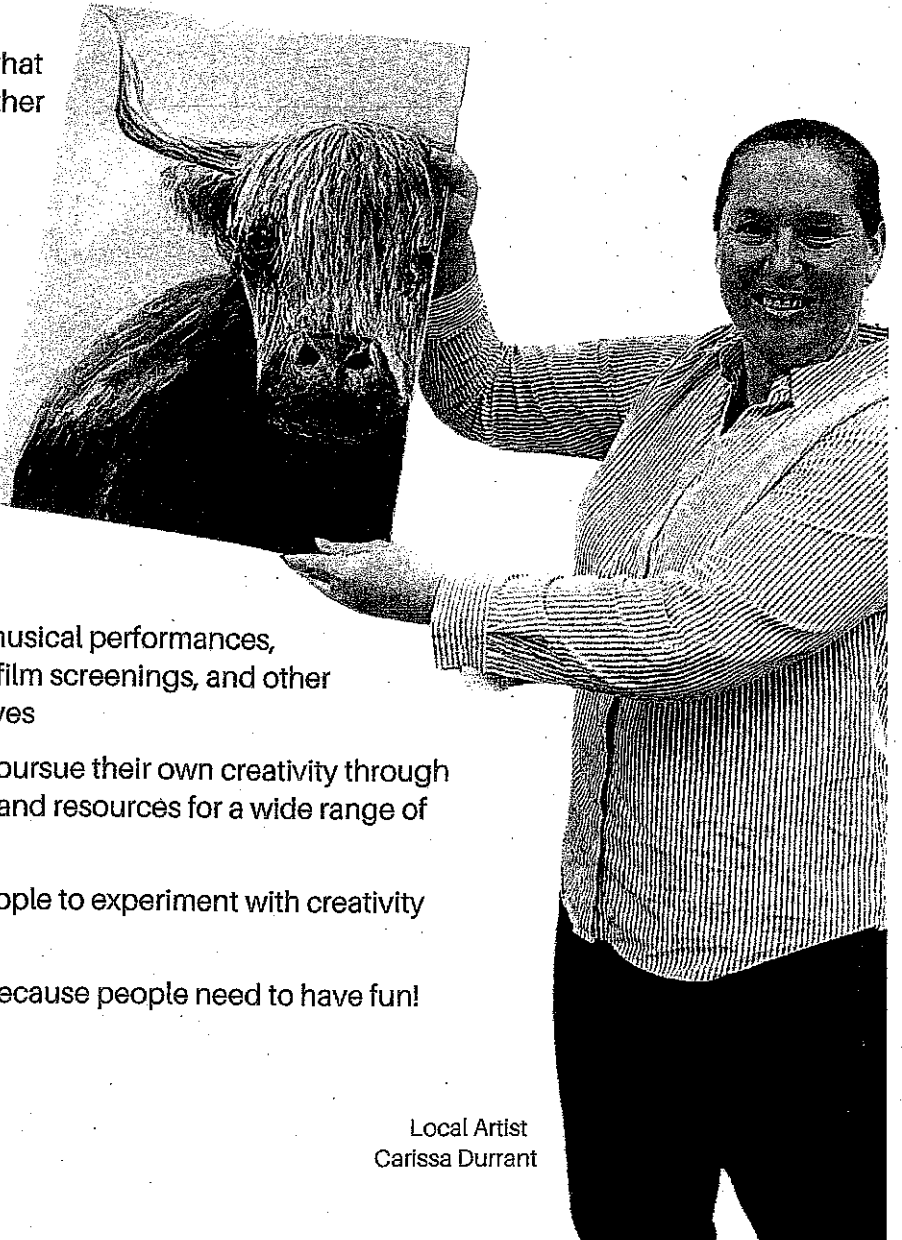
- Provide opportunities for people of differing viewpoints and experiences to meet and discuss important issues
- Train people to develop listening skills and increase understanding in conversations
- Weave listening and understanding exercises into programming for children, teens, and parents.
- Analyze the library collection to determine the extent to which it reflects our multicultural and diverse society
- Increase multicultural programming
- Offer recurring groups and activities that allow people to get to know one another

## enriching lives through the arts and culture

We find our way to each other through the arts and cultural experiences. These fundamental expressions of our shared humanity should be accessible to all.

### Goals:

- Increase arts programming through musical performances, community art shows, author events, film screenings, and other means to expand people's perspectives
- Allow people guidance and space to pursue their own creativity through workshops, writing contests, classes, and resources for a wide range of crafts and hobbies
- Increase access to tools that allow people to experiment with creativity and technology
- Incorporate play and entertainment because people need to have fun!



Local Artist  
Carissa Durrant



### Town of Berlin Tax Abatement Program Proposed January 9, 2024

The Town of Berlin, Connecticut recognizes the importance of continued economic growth in our community and has adopted the following tax abatement framework. Projects must be consistent with State Statutes. The Town policy is that projects must involve real property improvements for at least one of the following: (1) for office use; (2) for manufacturing use; (3) for warehouse, storage or distribution use; (4) for information technology; or (5) for restaurants, (6) new retail developments or redevelopment of existing retail properties that involve substantial renovations or restoration of the exterior of the building and improvements to landscaping including automotive dealerships selling new vehicles or (7) recreation facilities, and (8) mixed use, as defined in Section 8-13 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The following abatement schedule will be used by the Town Council as a guideline based upon factors including the investment made and other considerations concerning the quality of the project and its consistency with the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. The Town Council must act to approve each project and its specific abatement schedule.

For real property improvements of greater than \$150,000 if the project is for office use, for manufacturing use, for warehouse, storage or distribution use, recreation facilities, newly developed for restaurants, retail use or information technology the Town may offer:

			<u>Abatement Schedule:</u>				
Year 1	50%		Year 2	40%		Year 3	30%

For real property improvements of greater than \$50,000 if the project is for redevelopment of existing retail properties that involve substantial renovations or restoration of the exterior of the building and improvements to landscaping the Town may offer:

			<u>Abatement Schedule:</u>				
Year 1	50%		Year 2	40%		Year 3	30%

For real property improvements of greater than \$1,000,000 (One Million Dollars) for any type of eligible use above, the Town may offer:

			<u>Abatement Schedule:</u>						
Year 1	50%	Year 2	40%	Year 3	30%	Year 4	20%	Year 5	10%

For real property improvements of greater than \$3,000,000 (Three Million Dollars) for any type of eligible use above, the Town Council may offer:

			<u>Abatement Schedule:</u>										
Year 1	50%	Year 2	50%	Year 3	40%	Year 4	40%	Year 5	30%	Year 6	20%	Year 7	10%

For real property improvements of greater than \$12,500,000 (Twelve Million Five-Hundred Thousand Dollars) for any type of eligible use above, the Town Council may offer:

			<u>Abatement Schedule:</u>										
			Commercial										
Year 1	70%	Year 2	70%	Year 3	60%	Year 4	60%	Year 5	50%	Year 6	50%	Year 7	
			50%	Year 8	40%	Year 9	30%	Year 10		20%			

For real property improvements of greater than \$25,000,000 (Twenty-Five Million Five-Hundred Thousand Dollars) for any type of eligible use above, the Town Council may offer:

			<u>Abatement Schedule:</u>										
			Apartments										
Year 1	80%	Year 2	70%	Year 3	60%	Year 4	50%	Year 5	40%	Year 6	40%	Year 7	
			30%	Year 8	30%	Year 9	20%	Year 10		20%			
			Commercial										
Year 1	70%	Year 2	70%	Year 3	60%	Year 4	60%	Year 5	50%	Year 6	50%	Year 7	
			40%	Year 8	40%	Year 9	30%	Year 10		20%			

#### Application Procedure

The tax abatement program application should be submitted to the Economic Development Director for consideration for a recommendation by the Economic Development Commission to the Town Council. If approved by the Economic Development

Commission, then property owners within 500 feet of the proposed development site will be notified 7 days in advance of the meeting where the Town Council will consider a tax partnership application.

Applications will be accepted and considered under the tax abatement policy pertaining to mixed use projects in effect prior to the effective date of this amendment provided that any such projects will be required to have submitted an application for project approval to the Berlin Planning and Zoning Commission prior to the effective date of the amendment. ~~To be eligible, a minimum of at least 10% of the total new building square footage of the mixed-use project must be for commercial use~~

~~The Town Council has the discretion to request a minimum of 10% of all apartments be affordable (under 8-30g) for any mixed-use project which applies for the \$25,000,000 tax abatement.~~

Amendment effective date: TBD