



Town of Berlin – Water Control Commission Meeting Minutes July 22, 2025

CALL TO ORDER:

The Berlin Water Control Commission (BWCC) meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Liam Mitchell at 7:00 p.m., July 22, 2025 in the Public Works Department (Room 120), 240 Kensington Road. The meeting was available via Zoom, as well.

ATTENDANCE:

Vice-Chairman Liam Mitchell, Commissioners: David Dorau, Warren Baethge (Alternate-seated), Jim Phelps (Alternate-seated), Seb Senia (Alternate-zoom). Absent: Nicholas Stevens, and Alvaro Garcia, Jr.. Staff – Ray Jarema, P.E., Berlin Water Control Manager, and Jim Horbal- Deputy Dir. Public Works (zoom).

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR CHAIRMAN BRUCE LAROCHE- passed on July 21, 2025

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the June 17, 2025 meeting were previously mailed (and e-mailed) to the Commissioners for review.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 17, 2025 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Baethge. The motion was unanimously approved.

BUSINESS:

4.1 American Water Works Association (AWWA) - Public Affairs Update

4.1a) The AWWA is working with the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) to help inform guidance for Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI). Under the LCRI, all water systems, including systems that expect to receive a waiver from the inventory requirement, must confirm that "non-lead" service lines in their inventory are correctly classified as "non-lead" through a validation study.

Mr. Jarema confirmed that Berlin Water Control is fully complying with all the inventory requirements and will likely send another mailing out in the fall to try to narrow down more of the 'unknown' systems. BWCC currently has about 350 customers with 'unknown' status.

4.1b) President Trump released his budget request for the 2026 fiscal year which proposed deep cuts across the federal government including a 54% cut within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), requesting just \$150 million for DWSRF, \$155 million for CWSRF, and \$8 million for the WIFIA program. Collectively, the budget request seeks to cut these core water infrastructure programs by just under 90%.

Mr. Jarema added that we are still hopeful for a DWSRF Loan for the Meriden project (currently estimated at \$1.6 million).

4.1c) EPA- Rescinds PFAS Regulations and issue a final rule by Spring of 2026.

The AWWA and the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) filed a joint petition for judicial review and share EPA's goal of protecting people from potentially harmful levels of PFAS in drinking water.

4.1d) United States Health Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. and EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin recently announced that Utah and Florida are banning the addition of water fluoridation in their drinking water systems. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will convene with instructions to revoke the recommendation. The EPA will 'expeditiously review ne science' surrounding fluoridation and could pursue changing the Maximum Contaminant Level for fluoride, or take other actions.

Mr. Jarema added that there will be more to come on this issue, as this has been targeted by the current Administration.

Town Council Action July 8, 2025 -

Mr. Jarema reported that Town Council authorized his request to award DPC, LLC with the evaluation of the Berlin Turnpike and Middletown Road Sewer Pump Stations. DPC, LLC is most familiar with the on-going operations of these pump stations, and it is in the 'best interest' of the town to follow through with a professional evaluation. This review is approximately \$31,000.00.

Meriden Agreement Signed -

Mr. Jarema reported that the Meriden Sale of Water Agreement has been executed. This agreement will be critical to our Lamentation Tank project and later allowing Meriden to purchase water from Berlin, if ever needed. The Diversion Permit through DEEP and the Excess Water Permit through the DPH are both in progress and the bids for a Construction Manager should move forward by September or October.

Mattabassett Invoice Status

Mr. Jarema explained that the annual invoice sent out by the Mattabassett District is always due July 1st and the Mattabassett District is paid 'up-front' by Berlin Water Control, and then a 'formula' is used to figure the billing percentages to the Kensington and Worthington Fire Districts. The installation of the

Baxter Avenue meter has increased the accuracy of the billing to the Kensington Fire District tremendously.

The Worthington Fire District share of the billing has not been received to date.

The Kensington Fire District Chairman delivered their checks directly to the Town Manager, but calculated their own figures. Mr. Jarema discussed the amounts with the Corporation Counsel and the Director of Finance and Mr. Jarema sent a certified letter requiring the remaining balance to be paid in full within seven business days of receipt of the letter.

Status of Town-wide Water Study

Mr. Jarema reported that Haley Ward is still gathering information and hopefully have a draft of the study by the end of August. The study is incorporating both water and sewer information that will be valuable to the whole town.

Status of Sewer Infrastructure Evaluations- DPC, LLC

Mr. Jarema reported that the evaluation of the sewer infrastructure was necessary to establish the value similar to the water system. This evaluation was driven by the Town Auditor and the Town's Finance Director.

New Truck purchase

Mr. Jarema reported that a new work truck is scheduled to be purchased in this fiscal year. There is a 'rotation' in the fleet management of the town, and Water Control is in that cycle.

Fluoridation PA-25-168 signed into law

Governor Ned Lamont recently announced that he has signed legislation enacting a new State law requiring public water systems in Connecticut to maintain the existing levels of fluoride used in water supplies currently prescribed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), providing the State with defenses, should the Trump administration move forward with its plan to eliminate the federal standard (as previously mentioned in the minutes).

"Community water fluoridation has been effective in the United States for over 60 years, and it remains one of the most successful and efficient strategies in improving oral health". On average, every \$1 invested saves \$38 in dental treatment. A national ban on fluoride would increase dental costs by nearly \$20 billion over a ten-year period. Fluoridation became law in Connecticut in 1965 and has improved oral health for residents for 60 years. The new State law simply preserves the 0.7 mg/L standard in State statutes, no longer keeping it tied to HHS.

Leak Detection

Mr. Jarema requested to add an agenda item regarding leak detection.

Commissioner Baethge made a motion to add an agenda item regarding leak detection, seconded by Commissioner Dorau. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Jarema reported that the Connecticut Professional Company was hired to locate potential leaks in our systems. No major leaks were found and several hydrants had minor leaks, but corrected.

Lamentation Tank

Mr. Jarema requested to add an agenda item regarding Lamentation Tank

Commissioner Baethge made a motion to add an agenda item regarding Lamentation Tank, seconded by Commissioner Dorau. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Jarema reported that the Lamentation Tank was recently pressure washed and looks great on the outside, but a couple of companies were consulted (CORR Tech and USG) and put robots down into the tank to verify that there is indeed extensive corrosion on the bottom of the tank that should be repaired in the near future. The companies felt it would last 25 years once it is taken care of.

Executive Session - CGS-Sec 1-200 (6) (B): discuss personnel matter.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:35 p.m. to discuss matters relative to a litigation matter, seconded by Commissioner Baethge. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commissioners invited Ray Jarema, Jim Horbal, and Lecia Paonessa to attend the session.

Commissioner Baethge made a motion to end the Executive Session at 8:05 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Dorau. The motion was unanimously approved. No actions were taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Dorau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Baethge. The motion was unanimously approved.

Lecia Paonessa
Recording Secretary