

**January 6, 2026  
Planning Board**

**Present were Regular Members:** Tom McCue, Lori Langlois, Henry Noel, Dan Whittet, Cassandra Mason; **Ex-Officio Member:** Paul Grenier  
**Alternate Member:** None

**Excused were Members:** Micah Bachner, Jeffrey Quackenbush, and Eamon Kelley

**Others Present:** Pamela Laflamme, Director of Strategic Initiatives; Judi Barrett, Barrett Group, LLC (via Zoom); Sarah Ridyard, NHDES (via Zoom), Eric Grenier, HEB Engineers (via Zoom); Shelli Fortin, minutes; and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun

Tom McCue called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

**Approval of December Minutes**

**Henry Noel made a motion to approve the minutes of December 2, 2025, as presented. Dan Whittet seconded the motion. All were in favor of approving the minutes as presented, and the motion carried.**

**Draft Review of Zoning Ordinance Changes – Barrett Group, LLC**

Judi Barrett from Barrett Group, LLC, presented the draft of the Zoning Ordinance changes. Barrett reviewed the organization of the Articles. Article 1 notes the purpose of the Ordinance. Article 2 establishes districts and overlay districts. There is a table provided in this section which lists uses by districts. Article 4 is for density and dimension regulations. Article 5 covers non-conforming uses and structures. Ms. Barrett advised that this section needs to be clear and consistent, and suggested that the Building Inspector and ZBA pay close attention to this in their review. Ms. Barrett also noted that they should have a discussion about parking requirements and sign content.

Pamela Laflamme advised that she did have a draft of a new sign ordinance, which she will send to Ms. Barrett. Ms. Barrett questioned the performance standards and asked if the City has the ability to enforce these. Ms. Barrett offered to re-write Article 7 on special regulations, as the section on planned development is complex and not practical. Ms. Barrett noted that this could be simplified. Ms. Barrett also suggested that yard sales not be included in the Zoning Ordinance. Article 8 is Special Residential Regulations, which addresses housing needs. Article 9 covers overlay districts. Ms. Barrett asked if there was a map for the Mt. Forist and Mt. Jasper overlay district and Ms. Laflamme advised that there is one available. Article 10 covers enforcement and the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Article 11, the last section, covers definitions. Ms. Barrett advised that she is currently working with another employee to find uses that are not defined in the Ordinance, and definitions that are included that do not apply. Ms. Barrett noted that all definitions should be included in this section.

Ms. Laflamme advised that she has a form for members to submit comments and suggestions that she will distribute via email. Ms. Laflamme will also send out the separate tables to members for review.

Ms. Barrett advised that she would plan to attend the February meeting, as Michel Salek, the Building Inspector, will be reviewing his recommendations for the Ordinance. This discussion will include items such as fences, swimming pools, and junk motor vehicles.

### **Stormwater Asset Management Presentation – Eric Grenier, HEB Engineers**

Eric Grenier, from HEB Engineers, provided the final presentation for Stormwater Asset Management in Berlin. Mr. Grenier reviewed the project background, which was funded with a \$30,000 grant from NHDES, and included collection of field data, and analyzing the data to prepare an overview of the existing stormwater system. The project area covered the upper East Side of the City.

Goals of the program are to gain an understanding of the overall infrastructure condition, shift the focus from reactive to proactive with improvements, identify and prioritize maintenance and replacement needs, provide data for staff to make informed decisions, and develop a stormwater system GIS database.

Mr. Grenier noted that a core element of asset management is to develop a vision statement, which defines the overall objective related to stormwater asset management. The vision statement created is: “The project will give Berlin access to uninterrupted, dependable, and high-quality service by protecting community health and our critical infrastructure to ensure a resilient system for all residents in our community.”

Mr. Grenier advised that Level of Service Goals include Community Service, Internal, Operations and Maintenance, and Financial.

Mr. Grenier noted that data collection included CCTV inspections with City staff and equipment, along with an aerial survey of the project area with a drone. This allowed them to develop a stormwater asset map of the project area. Approximately 5,000 linear feet of pipe was inspected out of the total 18,350 feet. The system is primarily old clay pipes, and common issues are failing joints, fractures, and root intrusion. It was noted that the majority of the system is beyond its useful life. Fifty-seven of the 73 manholes were inspected, and issues with these include failing structure floors, broken masonry, and standing water.

Mr. Grenier provided a priority assessment by street based on likelihood of failure and consequence of failure, noting that all stormwater infrastructure is assumed to be beyond its useful life due to age and needs to be replaced. The estimated replacement cost is \$6,940,000.

The implementation plan includes further developing a stormwater GIS system database, and refining data gathering to gain a broader understanding of the system to plan for future CIP projects.

Mr. Grenier noted that next steps could include continuing development of the stormwater GIS database, evaluating funding to address stormwater improvements, identifying priority projects, and seeking funding opportunities to expand the asset management program to other parts of the City.

Dan Whittet asked if the cost to repair the infrastructure includes repairs to the street. Mr. Grenier advised that it does include the repair, but not a full-depth reconstruction of the road. Mr. Whittet also asked about water and sewer and was advised that the water system is funded by water rates, and that water and sewer are not included in the cost of repairs. Water and sewer pipes are deeper than drainage.

Paul Grenier asked about the type of material used for replacement piping, and Eric Grenier advised the standard is HDPE. Diameters range from 12 inches on side streets to as large as 48 inches, however they are generally between 12 and 24 inches. Pamela Laflamme advised that the estimated replacement cost does not include the box culvert that starts at Enman Hill and empties into the river by Community Field.

Sarah Ridyard of NHDES advised that applications will be available in the spring for loans from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. There is also up to \$100,000 principal loan forgiveness with the Planning Program. There is also a new program available that provides technical services through the state DES contracts. Daniel Whittet asked if any of these programs would help fund GIS work and Ms. Ridyard advised that it may be eligible under one of the programs.

### **Project Updates**

Pamela Laflamme advised that Ilana Preuss will give her final presentation at the City Hall Auditorium on January 22, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

Ms. Laflamme advised that FEMA re-did flood maps in 2013 and will be starting the process again for Coos County. They will be at City Hall on January 28 at 9:00 am, and in Lancaster that afternoon.

Ms. Laflamme advised the Small Business Development Center will be holding a meet and greet in early February, and are hoping to bring resources together.

Ms. Laflamme advised that UNH is providing a group for family-run businesses to work on succession plans, as many local businesses have closed rather than sell in recent years.

Ms. Laflamme advised that she is working on a clean-up and assessment grant from the EPA for downtown properties on Main and Pleasant Street, including the courthouse. She is also working on an application to Northern Borders to demolish the old Woolworth building, which will be expensive. She is hoping to tie this demolition into the larger economic development strategy.

Ms. Laflamme advised that she will be working on property easements on Enman Hill for the mitigation work with HEB.

There will be a meeting with NHDOT to develop a strategy to get bidders for the Mason Street Bridge repairs.

Stantec will be presenting at the February meeting for the RAISE grant, with updates on the scope of work. If the traffic pattern were to change, it would need to start at the split on Route 16 so the project area would need to be expanded.

The brackets are up for the solar panels at Brown Farm. The cold weather and the use of a different micro-inverter have slowed the project, but they are working on it.

### **Other**

Pamela Laflamme thanked Eamon Kelley and Paul Grenier for their service to the Board. Eamon Kelly was recently elected to the School Board. Paul Grenier will be finishing his time on the Council at the Council meeting on January 20.

Paul Grenier noted that this is his last meeting for now, and he will be taking some time off after serving for 32 years in various positions for the City and County.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the board, Lori Langlois moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Dan Whittet. All in favor, the motion carried.

The Planning Board meeting ended at 8:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Shelli Fortin