


Governmental Body:

The City Council of Baxter, Iowa

Date of Meeting:

Monday, January 12th, 2025

Time of Meeting:

6:00 P.M.

Place of Meeting:

Baxter Council Chambers

Call In Information:
**City Council Meeting – January 12, 2025,
6:00 PM (America/Chicago)**
**Please join my meeting from your
computer, tablet or smartphone.**
<https://meet.goto.com/183251021>
You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 183-251-021
United States: +1 (872) 240-3412

Mayor Danny Kunkel, Councilmember Lindsay Bethards, Michael Churchill, and Joel Schabilion were sworn in by City Administrator Clerk, Lucas Battani.

Mayor Danny Kunkel called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Present were Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. None was absent. Also present were City Administrator/Clerk Lucas Battani, Deputy City Clerk Jill Braye, Public Works Director Bryce Halter, and members of the public.

Milligan motioned to move agenda items #19, #20, and #21 after the task list. Bethards seconded. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried. Schabilion motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried. The consent agenda included the minutes from the December 8, 2025, City Council meeting, financials, and approval of a Class “C” Retail Alcohol License for Benola’s LLC, located at 108 N Main Street, Baxter, Iowa, for the license period January 15, 2026, through January 14, 2027, subject to receipt of all required state approvals.

The claims list is as follows:

Vendor	Description	Amount
	Reservation Portal	
ACTIVE NET	Setup	\$2,200.00
ALLIANT ENERGY	Gas/Electric Utilities	\$3,127.20
B3 TECHNOLOGY	IT services	\$240.00
BASE	POP Renewal	\$100.00
BLACK HILLS ENERGY	Gas/Electric Utilities	\$422.46
BRICK GENTRY P.C.	Legal services	\$2,980.00
CENTRAL PUMP & MOTOR LLC	Pump repair	\$1,530.15
CIT SEWER SOLUTIONS	Utility services	\$8,760.90
CONSUMER S ENERGY	Gas/Electric Utilities	\$58.61
ED LEEDOM	Inspection	\$932.80
FIRST NATIONAL BANK OMAHA	Library Materials	\$259.72
FIRST NET	Telecomm	\$86.26
IA REGIONAL UTILITIES ASSOC.	IT services	\$10,019.02
IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY	Bond/finance fees	\$11,193.75

IOWA ONE CALL	Dig Notifications	\$47.70
IPERS	Employee Benefits	\$365.77
JASPER COUNTY AUDITOR	EMS Services	\$589.89
JASPER COUNTY SHERIFF EMS/ALS	EMS Services	\$150.00
JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL	Maintenance Supp.	\$131.51
KRAMPE WELDING & FABRICATION	Repair services	\$6,600.00
MADISON NATL. LIFE INS. CO. IN	Insurance premium	\$81.47
MECKLEY PARTS & SERVICE	Repair services	\$175.00
MICROBAC	Lab Testing	\$35.00
MIDWEST SANITATION & RECYCLING	Garbage/Recycling	\$14,090.03
MSA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	Engineering services	\$28,925.25
MURPHY, SAMANTHA	Safety Deposit	\$150.00
NEEDHAM EXCAVAT.& LANDSCAPING	Snow Hauling	\$2,450.00
NEWTON DAILY NEWS	Publication	\$461.23
NEWTON FIRE DEPARTMENT	EMS Services	\$500.00
PARTNER COMMUNICATIONS	Telecomm	\$470.78
PCC	Telecomm	\$1,387.83
PETERMEIER, CAREY	Reimbursement	\$78.20
QUILL CORP.	Office supplies	\$110.96
SPANGENBURG, INC.	Water/Sewer Services	\$65,086.65
SPEER FINANCIAL INC.	Financial Services	\$425.00
SPRINGER PROF. HOME SERVICES	Pest Control	\$107.80
USIC LOCATING SERVICES	Dig Notifications	\$689.25
USS POLARIS	Repair services	\$2,060.65
VC3 INC.	IT services	\$3,850.90
WALSH DOOR & SECURITY	Park Maintenance	\$2,094.61
WELLMARK	Employee Benefits	\$2,289.63
WELTHA, CLAYTON	Meter Deposit	\$91.74
XEROX CORPORATION	Copier services	\$126.85
YOUR FLEETCARD PROGRAM	Fuel	\$579.11
	TOTAL	\$176,113.68

Fund	Expenditures
001 GENERAL FUND	\$18,521.46
110 ROAD USE TAX	\$8,063.93
112 EMPLOYEE BENEFIT	\$760.47
125 TAX INCREMENT FIN.	\$425.00
200 DEBT SERVICE	\$2,371.25
301 CAPITAL PROJECTS	\$28,925.25
600 WATER FUND	\$69,568.96
605 METER DEPOSITS	\$91.74

610 SEWER FUND	\$15,068.68
611 SEWER REVENUE	
BOND	\$8,822.50
670 LANDFILL	\$16,090.03
740 STORM WATER FUND	\$7,404.41
TOTAL	\$176,113.68

City Administrator/Clerk Lucas Battani provided an update under the Administrator Report, informing the council that the city's electronic sign is working, thanks again in part to Partners Communications Cooperative and Daktronics, which provided a technical guide for our sign.

Mayor Kunkel announced he would listen to volunteers for committee positions. Milligan asked to be on the Water/Sewer Committee. Smith and Schabilion asked to be on the Baxter Rural Fire & Rescue Advisory board. Mayor Kunkel advised that he would have further appointments in February.

Council reviewed the claims listing. No questions were asked to staff.

Smith motioned to approve Resolution 2026-01 authorizing execution of the 2026 General Engineering Services Agreement with MSA Professional Services, Inc. Seconded by Milligan. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Council reviewed preliminary plans related to the Rippey Avenue intersection and Chichaqua Valley Trail improvements. Milligan motioned to add a sidewalk to the east side of the existing curb and gutter, and have MSA move forward with finalizing the plans. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to table the agreement for the concrete repair in front of the fire station doors, pending Public Works Director Bryce Halter marking off the areas to be replaced. Halter advised that he could do that on January 13th. After review, the council would discuss next steps regarding the replacement at the February council meeting. If approved by the council, staff would send the contractor an agreement to sign, knowing that the replacement date would depend on the Fire and EMS' schedule to prevent trucks from sitting outside in the freezing cold. Seconded by Churchill. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Council participated in Budget Workshop #2 for the FY2027 budget. Discussion only; no formal action taken. Council chose to set up a third budget workshop open to the public for January 26th at 6:00 pm.

Council conducted an ordinance workshop related to codifier recommendations and provided direction to staff. Council advised staff to make the Mobile Food Vendor fee \$30 per year, requiring proof of insurance from the vendor. Ask the codifier to look out for a couple of typos that were found and to add language about ice fishing at Geise Park pond, now that fishing will one day be an available option for residents.

Milligan motioned to adopt Resolution 2026-02, which establishes water rates to increase by 3% effective February 1st, 2026. Another 3% effective July 1st, 2026. Council will then reassess water rates in September 2026 to determine whether further increases are needed, effective January 1st, 2027. The water rate increases are due to Baxter's wholesale water vendor, IRUA, raising rates after the company decided to build its own facility following its split with the City of Newton. Seconded by Bethards. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to approve Resolution 2026-03 authorizing the \$52,233.10 payment of the Auditor of State invoice. City Administrator/Clerk advised council that an insurance claim is being submitted to Baxter's insurance provider, where the cost of the audit invoice would be covered. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Smith motioned to approve Resolution 2026-04, authorizing the transfer of \$34,498.20 from the LMI Fund to the Water Fund. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to authorize a City-issued work phone for the Mayor, not to exceed \$100 per month. Seconded by Churchill. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Council decided to assign Deputy Clerk Jill Braye to schedule a community meeting in the Spring of 2026 among the school district, the city, local community groups, and businesses that wish to attend. Milligan asked that the meeting be structured so that each group would present an issue they have, allowing discussion of potential solutions among the groups.

Smith motioned to accept the resignation of City Administrator/Clerk Lucas Battani, effective January 29th, 2026. Seconded by Milligan. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Public comments were received from Nancy Foreman, 401 Hoover Avenue, requesting clarification on staffing for 2024 and the payables list in the Jasper County Tribune. Doug Bishop, 307 Polk Street, discussed moving forward as a city and how the council should appoint Jill Braye as the new City Administrator/Clerk, and the mistake it would be to not do so.

Council reviewed the task list and provided updates. No formal action taken.

Milligan motioned to enter closed session pursuant to Iowa Code §21.5(1)(i). Seconded by Bethards. Roll call vote: Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Nays: N/A. Motion carried. Council entered closed session at 7:35 p.m.

Council exited closed session at 7:43 p.m.

Milligan motioned to appoint Jill Braye as interim City Administrator/Clerk effective January 30th, 2026. Seconded by Bethards. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to authorize recruitment for Deputy City Clerk, and then to post the City Administrator/Clerk position at three public locations for 10 days. Council will then meet on January 26th to discuss permanently appointing a City Administrator/Clerk. Seconded by Bethards. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Bethards, Churchill, Milligan, Schabilion, and Smith. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
BAXTER IOWA

DANNY KUNKEL, MAYOR
CITY OF BAXTER, IA

ATTEST:

LUCAS BATTANI, CITY ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK
CITY OF BAXTER, IOWA