Special Common Council Meeting Agenda

August 13, 2026 - 6:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers
3805 S Casper Drive

Agenda Published: 8/7/2026

AGENDA

1. **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**
   Each speaker will be limited to three (3) minutes. The Privilege of the Floor session shall not exceed a total of thirty (30) minutes, unless extended by the Common Council.
2. **CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL; DECLARATION OF QUORUM; PUBLIC NOTICE**
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
   A. Discussion and Possible Action to Adopt Resolution No. 2026-14 Approving the Property Tax Levy Referendum Question, Directing the City Clerk to Certify the Referendum to the Waukesha County Clerk, and Directing that the Question be Placed on the November 3, 2026, General Election Ballot.
5. **ADJOURN**

Additional Information

- The agenda packet with supplemental information related to the agenda items is available online at www.NewBerlinWi.gov. Once finalized by the governing body, approved meeting minutes are also posted online.
- The governing body may consider agenda items out of order
- Members, and potentially a quorum of other governmental bodies of the municipality, may be present at the meeting to gather information. No action will be taken by any governmental body other than the one referenced in this notice.
- With reasonable notice, accommodations will be provided under the Americans with Disabilities Act to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities through appropriate aids and services. For more information or to request assistance, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at (262) 786-8610.

City of New Berlin

Community Meeting:

Public Safety Information

Planning for Reliable Police, Fire, and EMS Services

July 2026

Why are We Here?

Public Safety Service Demands

Demands continue to evolve.

Staffing Needs

Planning for today and the future.

Financial Considerations

Balancing needs and resources.

Funding Options Under Evaluation

Exploring solutions for the future.

Public Safety Questions

We value your input and feedback.

City of New Berlin

Public Safety Planning Process

Since 2015
Additional Support Requested
Public Safety Departments evaluate staffing needs and request personnel.

2025
Discussions Began
Police, Fire, and Finance staff began evaluating funding options and planning for the future.

May 2026
Committee of the Whole
Staff presented information to the Common Council.

July 2026
Community Information
Public meetings to share information and gather feedback.

August 2026
Council Consideration
Common Council is expected to consider a referendum question.

November 3, 2026
Election
(if approved)
Voters will decide at the ballot box.

How Has New Berlin Changed?

SINCE 2015

400
RESIDENTIAL UNITS ADDED

91
COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

58
COMMERCIAL ADDITIONS

Who Does Public Safety Serve?

RESIDENT POPULATION

- 2010: 39,584
- 2020: 40,451
- 2025 Estimate: 39,953

Approximately 40,000 residents

ESTIMATRED DAYTIME POPULATION

46,000+

2023 Census estimate based on jobs located in New Berlin and daily activity in the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY ALSO SERVES

Employees | Customers | Visitors | Recreational | Commuters

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Nearly 1 in 4 residents is age 65 or older.

What Drives Public Safety Demand?

PUBLIC SAFETY DEMAND

Community Development
Residential, commercial, and industrial growth

Service Population
Employees, customers, visitors, and commuters

Traffic Volumes
Daily traffic and major transportation corridors

EMS Demand
Rising medical and behavioral health calls

Aging Population
Nearly 1 in 4 residents is age 65 or older

Community Events & Recreation
Events, activities, and recreation use

Overlapping Incidents
Multiple calls occurring at the same time

Increasing Call Complexity
More complex calls require more time and resources

Fire Department Overview

Dedicated to protecting life, property, and our community

Fire Suppression

Rapid response to all types of fire emergencies

Hazardous Materials Response

Specialized response to hazardous conditions

Emergency Medical Services

Advanced life support and emergency medical care

Public Education & Prevention

Community education, fire prevention, and safety programs

Rescue Services

Technical rescue for all types of emergencies

Fire Service Demands

SINCE 2015

+40% **INCREASE IN CALLS FOR SERVICE**

3,636 calls in 2015 to 5,046 calls in 2025

70%+ **OF ALL CALLS ARE EMS RELATED**

EMS is the primary driver of the call volume

54% **OF EMS CALLS OVERLAP ANOTHER INCIDENT**

Reducing the availability of units to respond to other emergencies

RESPONSE GOALS

BECOMING MORE CHALLENGING

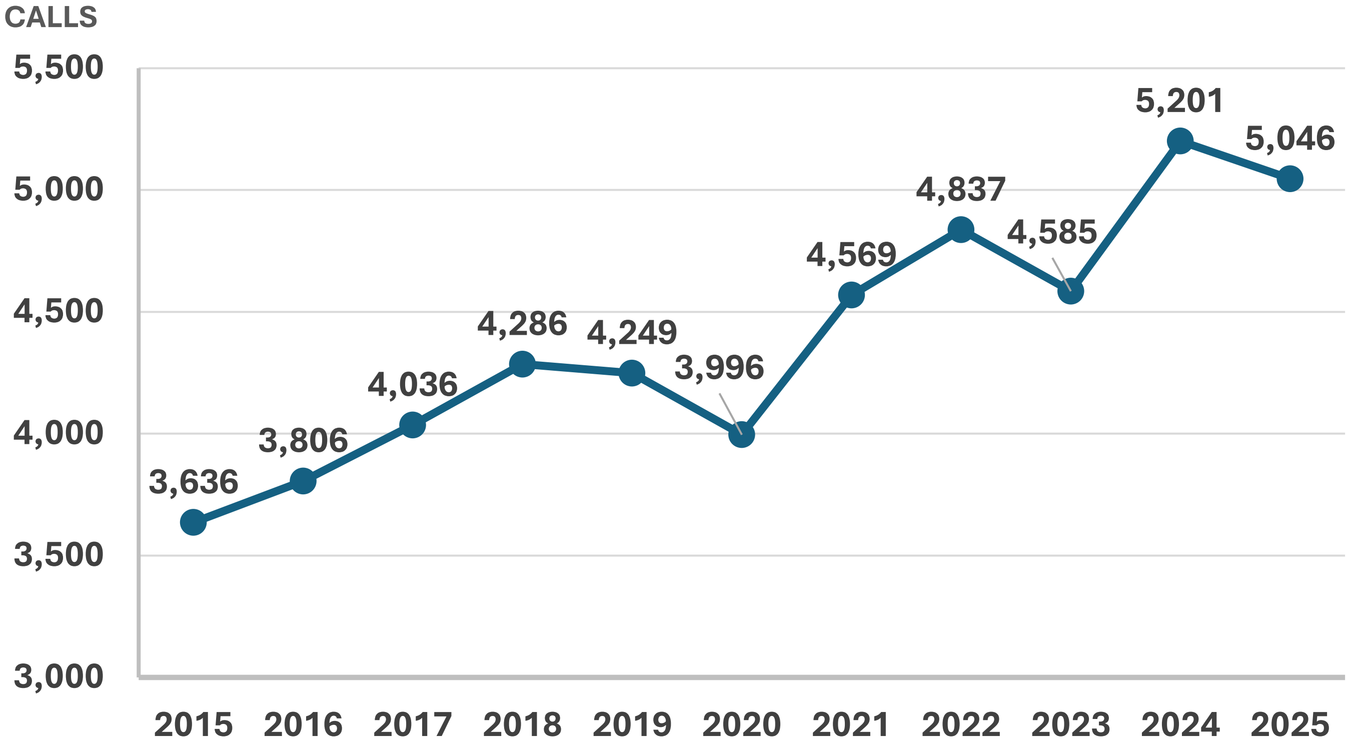
Increasing demand and overlapping incidents impact the ability to meet national response standards

CALLS FOR SERVICE TREND

Total Annual Calls for Service

+40% **INCREASE IN CALLS FOR SERVICE**

3,636 calls in 2015 to 5,046 calls in 2025



Why Do Overlapping Incidents Matter?

Emergencies do not occur one at a time.

When units are committed to one call, fewer resources are available to respond elsewhere in the City.

1

1:05 PM

INCIDENT #1

Ambulance dispatched for a medical call.

2

911

1:12 PM

INCIDENT #2

While committed, another EMS call comes in.

3

1:17 PM

INCIDENT #3

A motor vehicle accident occurs in another area.

Why Additional Staffing Matters

CURRENT STAFFING

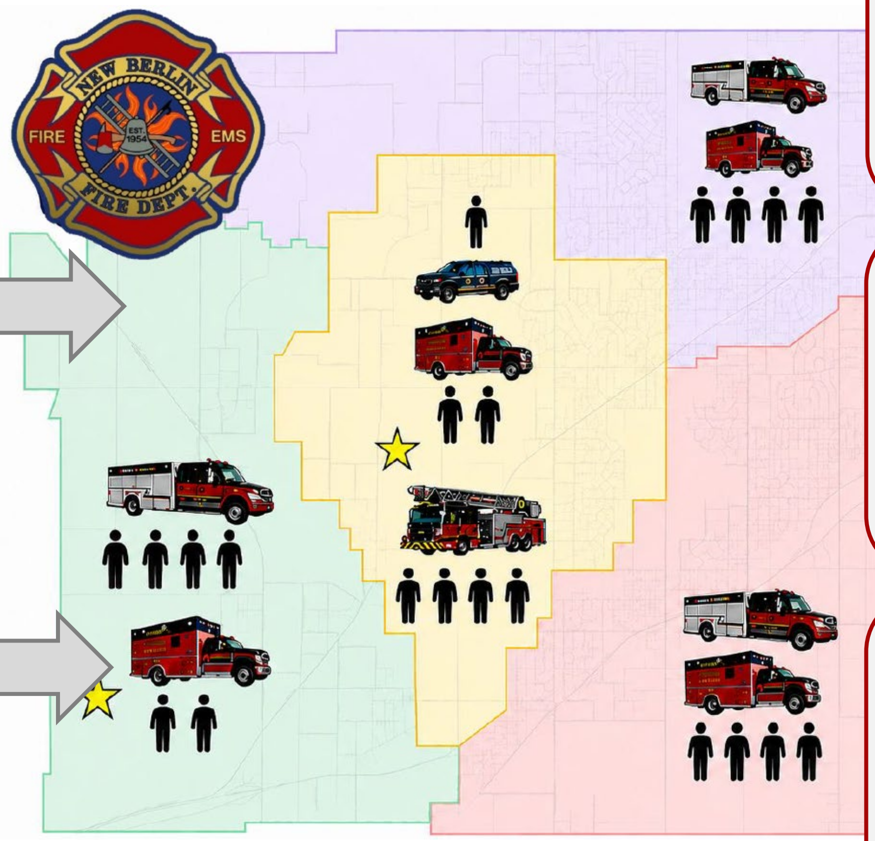
13.98

Average Daily Staffing
2026 Projection

Cross-Staffed Apparatus
Personnel may operate different vehicles depending on staffing and incident needs.

Limited Availability During Overlaps
When incidents overlap, resources may already be committed to another emergency.

PROPOSED STAFFING



17 MINIMUM

21 MAXIMUM

Proposed Daily Staffing

Apparatus Availability
More available personnel mean more units can respond simultaneously.

Improved Coverage During Overlaps
More personnel on duty improves availability when multiple emergencies occur at the same time.

Additional staffing strengthens response capabilities and improves community safety.
More People | More Apparatus | Better Availability | Stronger Coverage

Response time and National Standards

Every second counts.

Response time is directly impacted by staffing levels.

36%	28%
EMS GOAL MET	FIRE GOAL MET

Current Response Goal Achievement

Based on NFPA 1710 standards

National Fire Protection Association

NFPA

NFPA 1710 BENCHMARK

90% of calls should be answered within 240 seconds (4 minutes) for an effective response force.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- **High call volumes increase demand**
- **Overlapping incidents reduce unit availability**
- **Growth and development increase response needs**
- **Meeting response goals is more difficult with limited resources**

Proposed Fire Department Staffing

STAFFING REQUEST

+12
Firefighter/ Paramedics

+1
Division Chief

+3
Captain Promotions

Strengthen response capability. Improve availability. Plan for the future.

Why These Positions?

Firefighter/ Paramedics

- 6 assigned to Station 7
- 6 assigned to Station 9
- Improve coverage
- Improve unit availability
- Reduce response times

Division Chief

- Oversees training for all Fire & EMS personnel
- Ensures consistent, high-quality training across all shifts
- Supports operational readiness

Captain Promotions

- Succession planning
- Leadership development
- Prepare future Battalion Chiefs
- Ensure continuity and stability

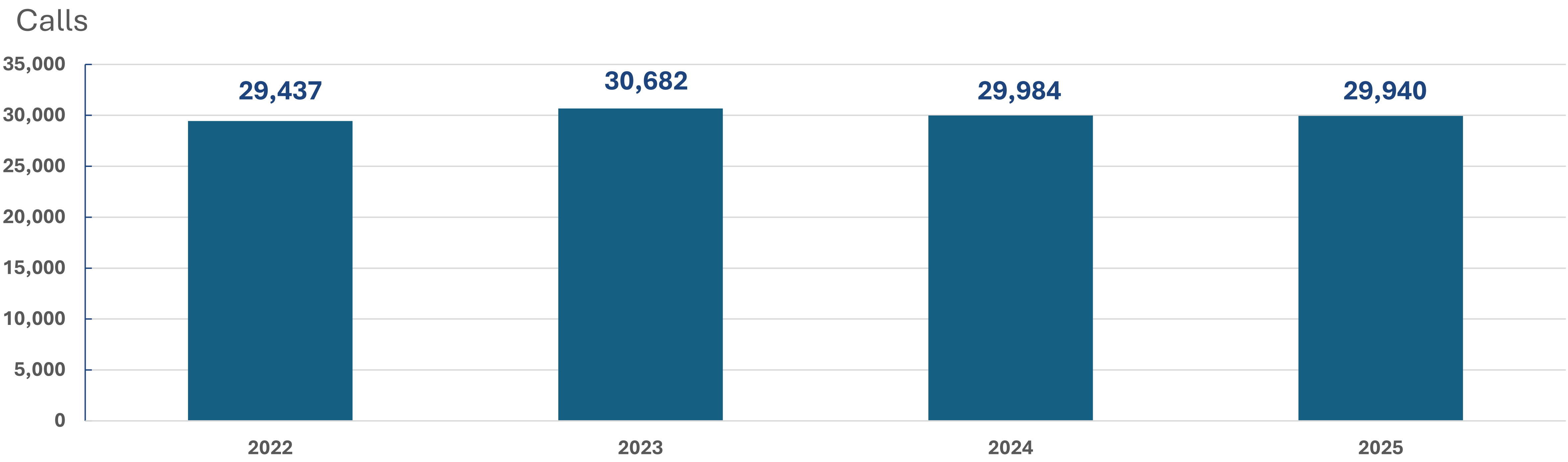
Police Department Overview

Committed to protecting the lives and property of the people it serves and to preventing crime through partnership with the community.

- Patrol Services
- Investigations
- School Resource Officers
- Traffic Safety
- Community Policing
- Mental Health Response

Police Service Demands

Calls for service remain near 30,000 annually.
Demand has not declined.



Consistent, high demand for police services continues year after year.

Calls Becoming More Complex

Today's calls often require more time, resources, and follow-up.

TRAFFIC CRASHES

- Every crash requires investigation, documentation, and traffic management
- Multi-vehicle crashes require additional personnel and resources

MENTAL HEALTH

Assessments, coordination, and transport

FRAUD & FINANCIAL CRIMES

Evidence collection and complex investigations

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Tactical planning, resource management, detailed investigations, and scene processing

ONGOING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Extensive reports, records, redactions, and compliance

More time on each call = less time available for proactive policing and community engagement.

Training & Professional Standards

Modern policing requires more specialized training than in previous decades.

De-escalation & Crisis Response

- De-escalation tactics and communication
- Critical Intervention Training (CIT)
- Less-lethal tools training

Vehicle & Pursuit Training

- Pursuit decision-making and tactics
- Pursuit driving techniques
- Termination tactics: Stop Sticks and Pursuit Intervention Techniques (PIT)

Critical Incident Response

- Active assailant response
- Mass casualty incidents
- Police-involved shooting investigations
- Meeting high expectations for rapid, professional response

Specialized Investigations

- Human trafficking
- Fraud crimes
- Digital evidence recovery
- Technology-driven investigations

Training keeps officers prepared, but it also requires personnel to be temporarily unavailable for patrol.

Staffing Challenges

70 Sworn Officers

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Retirements, injuries, military leave, family leave, vacations, training, and other absences **reduce the number of officers available for duty each day.**

Hiring and training new police officers takes approximately **14 months** before they are fully operational.

HIRING & TRAINING PROCESS: 14 MONTHS

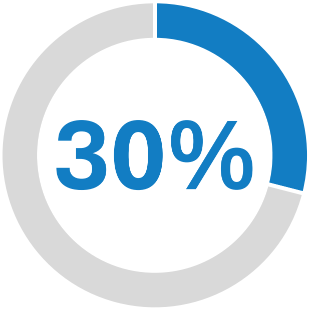
Recruitment 2-3 Months → **Academy** 5-6 Months → **Field Training** 4-5 Months → **Fully Operational**

Police Staffing History

2004	**74** officers
2012-2014	**67** officers
Recent Years	**70** officers

Current staffing remains below 2004 levels.

LOOKING AHEAD



20

Eligible to retire by 2030

Succession planning is essential to maintain reliable staffing and service levels.

LONG-TERM PLANNING

Police staffing needs have been identified through the City's annual budget process **since 2020.**

The department has consistently evaluated operational needs and adjusted its requests as **community needs have evolved.**

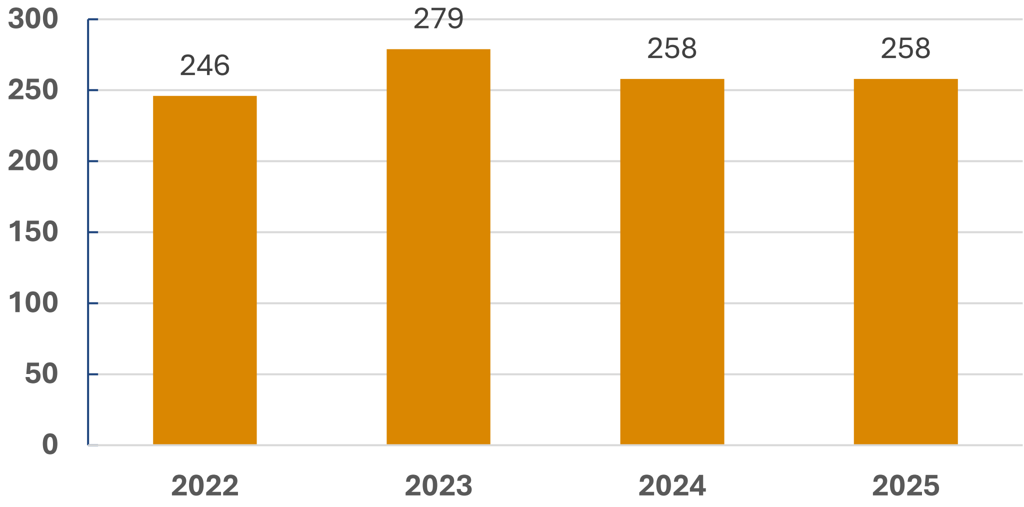
Mental Health Response

Mental health calls are time-intensive & require significant officer resources.

Mental health commitments average
9.5 HOURS
from initial contact to placement.

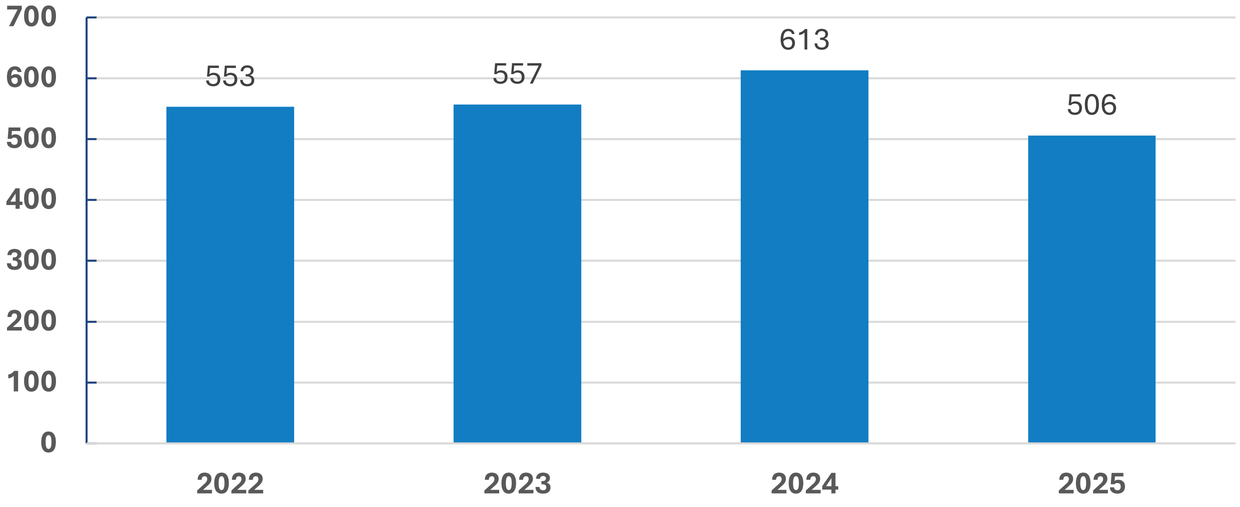
Crisis Worker Contacts

Calls without emergency detention



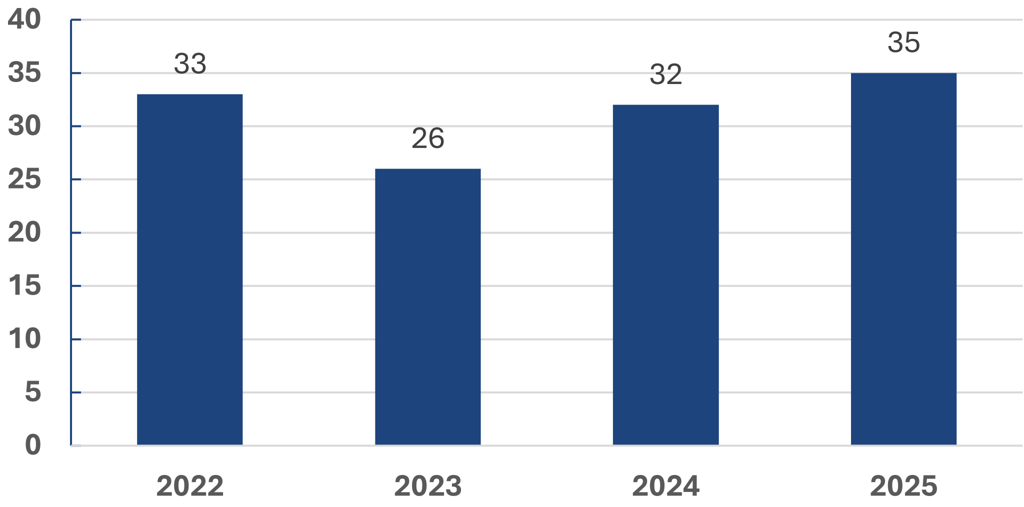
Wellbeing Checks

Continue to increase



Emergency Detentions

Calls with mental health commitments



Why Additional Staffing Matters

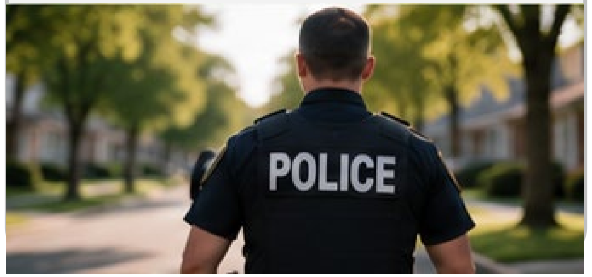
Healthy staffing levels strengthen our ability to serve the community effectively.

Maintain Reliable Patrol Coverage

- Meet minimum staffing levels
- Reduce reliance on overtime
- Maintain consistent service delivery

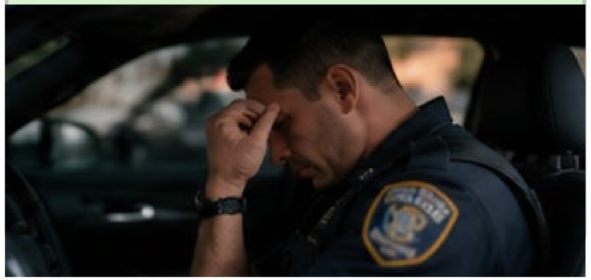
Support Proactive Policing

- More time for traffic enforcement
- Neighborhood patrols
- Crime prevention and community engagment



Improve Workforce Sustainability

- Reduce extended shifts and mandatory overtime
- Help manage fatigue and burnout
- Support recruitment and retention



Increase Operational Flexibility

- Respond to emerging crime trends
- Assign personnel to specialized investigations
- Maintain coverage during training, leave, and major incidents

Healthy staffing levels improve service, increase flexibility, and help maintain reliable police operations throughout the community.

Proposed Police Department Staffing

These positions strengthen the department’s ability to serve the community.

+3 **Police Officers**

Increase patrol coverage, response capability, and operations flexibility.

+1 **Embedded Crisis Worker**

Provide on-scene mental health assessment and coordination.

+2 **Police Service Aides**

Support administration tasks and free up sworn officers for patrol.

Investing in people. Investing in community safety.

Why These Positions?

CHALLENGES	PROPOSED SOLUTIONS
Increasing mental health calls and crisis situations.	1 Embedded Crisis Worker
Staffing gaps, retirements, and growing workload.	3 Police Officers
Administrative workload takes officers off patrol.	2 Police Service Aides

These positions address today’s challenges and help maintain reliable police services now and into the future.

Financial Considerations

City of New Berlin

We've discussed why the Police and Fire Departments have identified additional staffing needs.

The next section explains the financial considerations, how public safety services are funded, and why the City is evaluating a potential referendum.

City of New Berlin

Strong Financial Foundation

Aaa

Aaa Bond Rating

Moody's highest rating

Annual Audits

Demonstrates financial integrity

Strong Financial Reserves

Prepared for the future

Lower Municipal Tax Rate

Compared with Many Wisconsin Cities

New Berlin remains in a strong financial position.

Understanding the Financial Challenge

COSTS CONTINUE TO GROW

Inflation
Prices for goods, services, and wages continue to increase.

Public Safety Services
Demand for police, fire, and EMS services continues to rise.

Personnel
Recruitment, retention, training, and benefit costs are increasing.

Equipment & Operations
Vehicles, equipment, fuel, and other operational costs continue to rise.

VS.

REVENUE GROWTH IS LIMITED

State Levy Limits
Wisconsin law generally limits property tax levy growth.

Net New Construction
Levy growth is generally tied to the value of net new construction.

Property Tax Levy Growth
Revenue growth has not kept pace with long-term operating costs.

Over time, operating costs have grown faster than the City's recurring property tax revenue.

Can New Development Keep Pace with Rising Costs?

New construction growth has not kept pace with inflation, statewide or in New Berlin.

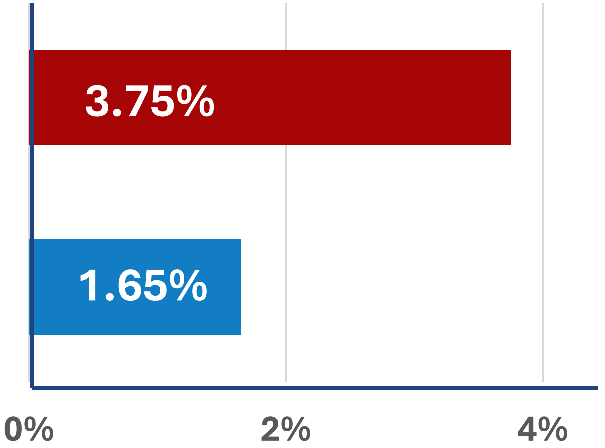
STATEWIDE (6-YEAR AVERAGE)

Inflation (CPI) Growth

3.75%

Net New Construction Growth (NNC)

1.65%



Across Wisconsin, new construction **has not kept pace** with inflation.

NEW BERLIN

Recent Net New Construction Growth (NNC)

2023	2024	2025
1.041%	0.619%	0.762%

New Berlin has experienced **even lower** growth than the statewide average in recent years.

New development helps, but by itself, it has <u>not</u> generated enough recurring revenue to keep pace with rising operating costs.

City of New Berlin

Responsible Financial Planning

Multi-Year ARPA Strategy
Stretching one-time funds over multiple years

Department Reorganizations
Aligning resources and improving efficiency

Operational Efficiencies
Continuously reviewing processes and practices

Health Insurance Review
Evaluating options to manage costs

Banking Services Review
Ensuring the best value for City services

New Berlin has pursued efficiencies and cost-saving measures before evaluating additional funding options.

City of New Berlin

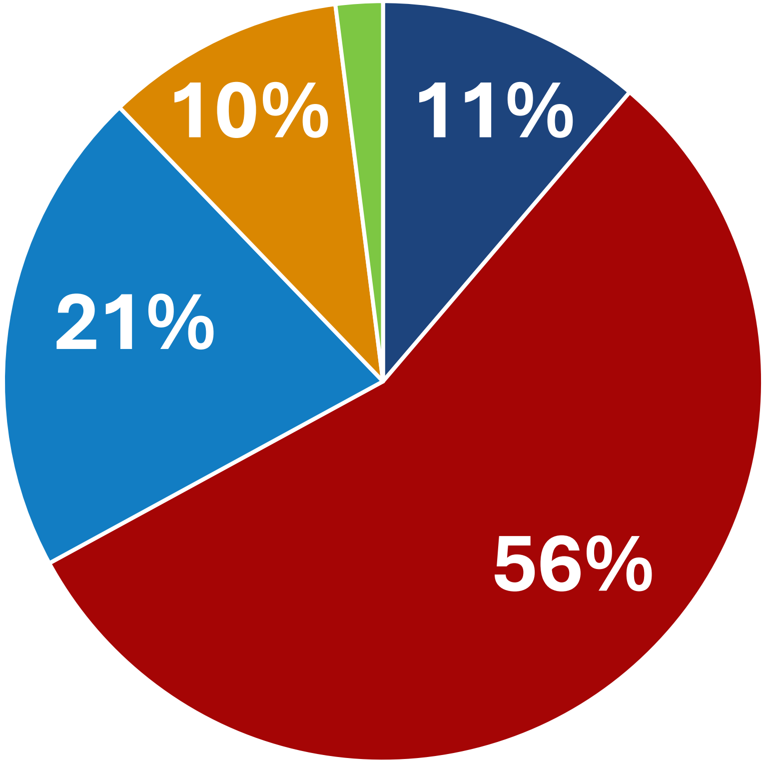
Where Your Property Tax Goes

The City of New Berlin receives approximately 42% of the property tax collected.

Waukesha County	City of New Berlin	School District	WCTC (Waukesha County Technical College)
12%	42%	44%	2%

Limited Budget Flexibility

What happens to the 42% of property tax that the City of New Berlin receives?



Public Safety - 56%
Police and Fire services and staffing

General Government - 21%
Administrative and support services that keep City operations running

Public Works - 11%
Streets, infrastructure maintenance, fleet, snow removal, and other services

Culture - 10%
Parks, recreation, libraries, and community events

Community Development - 2%
Planning, zoning, building inspections, and economic development

Most of the City's budget supports essential services, leaving limited flexibility for significant reductions.

Proposed Public Safety Investment

Position	Proposed Positions	Estimated Annual
Police Officer	3 positions	$524,694
Paramedic	12 positions	$1,996,395
Police Service Aids	2 part-time	$39,446
Crisis Worker	1 contract	$124,526
Division Chief	1 position	$204,239
Lieutenant to Captain	3 promotions	$59,050
Estimated Annual Personnel Cost		**$2,948,349**

Estimated Annual Equipment	Cost
Police	$16,800
Paramedic	$58,500
Police Squad	$98,500
Estimated Equipment Cost	**$173,800**

Total Estimated Annual Investment

$3,122,149

(Personnel + Equipment)

City of New Berlin

Who Would Contribute to the Public Safety Levy?

Here's how the additional levy requested through the referendum would be shared.

Property Type	Share of City's Assessed Value	Estimated Contribution to Public Safety Levy
Residential	75.3%	$2.35 million
Commercial	20.1%	$628,000
Manufacturing	4.4%	$137,000
Other	0.2%	$5,600
Total	100%	$3.12 million

All taxable property contributes toward funding City services, including residential, commercial, manufacturing, and other property classifications.

City of New Berlin

Estimated Property Tax Impact

Personnel	Equipment	Total
$39.28 per $100,000 assessed value	**$2.32** per $100,000 assessed value	**$41.60** per $100,000 assessed value

Average New Berlin Home: **$375,246**

$156 PER YEAR	**$13** PER MONTH	**$3.00** PER WEEK	**$0.43** PER DAY

Impact shown is an estimate based on current information and subject to change.

What Happens Next?

Public Safety Information Meetings	Common Council Considers Referendum	Referendum on the Ballot *(if approved)*	Voter Decision	Implementation *(if approved)*
July 13 & July 21	August 13	November 3		

Our Commitment to you

Transparency
Providing clear, accurate information

Responsibility
Stewarding resources wisely

Community Focus
Investing in public safety for a strong future

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS EVENING.

Questions?

City of New Berlin

PUBLIC SAFETY FAQ

Planning for Reliable Police, Fire, and EMS Services

These questions summarize topics discussed during the Public Safety Information Meetings.

Additional information, presentation materials, meeting recordings, and updates are available at:
newberlinwi.gov/referendum

1 Has a referendum question been approved?

No. The Common Council has not approved a referendum question or authorized placement on the ballot at this time. The proposed referendum question is anticipated to be presented to the Common Council for consideration on August 13, 2026.

2 Why is the City discussing a referendum?

Police, Fire, and Finance staff have evaluated public safety service demands, staffing needs, operational challenges, and future funding considerations. A referendum is being considered as one option to support future police, fire, and EMS staffing and operational needs to help maintain reliable public safety services for the community.

3 Why is the City discussing this now?

Public safety staffing needs have been evaluated through the City's annual budget process for many years. Police and Fire departments have submitted staffing requests as community needs evolved. In 2025, the City began publicly discussing alternative funding options after those needs continued to exceed the funding available through the regular operating budget.

4 Why can't this be funded through the existing budget?

New Berlin remains in strong financial standing and maintains an Aaa bond rating. However, state levy limits restrict the City's ability to increase funding for growing operational and public safety service demands through the regular budget process.

5 Why can't the City borrow the money?

The proposed funding would primarily support ongoing operational expenses, including salaries, benefits, training, and other costs associated with public safety staffing. These expenses occur every year and are part of the City's operating budget. While municipalities can borrow funds for certain one-time capital expenses, such as buildings or infrastructure improvements, borrowing is generally not used to fund recurring staffing and operational costs. The proposed staffing costs and related expenses would continue year after year, requiring a sustainable long-term funding source.

Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

6 Doesn't new development pay for growth?

Yes, new development contributes to the City's tax base. However, Wisconsin's levy limit law restricts how much additional property tax revenue the City can retain from that growth. As a result, revenue growth has generally not kept pace with rising operating costs and inflation.

7 Why are additional Fire positions needed?

Approximately 70% of Fire Department calls are EMS-related, and more than half of EMS incidents overlap with another emergency incident. The proposed Fire Department staffing increase is intended to improve emergency response availability, address overlapping incidents, and strengthen response capacity.

8 Why are additional Police positions needed?

The Police Department has identified staffing needs during the annual budget process since 2020. Additional staffing would help maintain minimum staffing levels, reduce reliance on overtime, support proactive policing, improve operational flexibility, and address increasing service demands.

9 What is a Crisis Worker?

A Crisis Worker is a trained professional who assists law enforcement officers during mental health-related incidents and helps connect individuals with appropriate resources and support services. A Crisis Worker can often remain engaged with individuals in crisis, so officers can return to patrol and remain available for other public safety needs.

10 Why can't mutual aid replace additional staffing?

Mutual aid from neighboring communities is an important resource, and we are grateful for those partnerships. However, mutual aid is not always immediately available, is not intended to replace routine staffing needs, and cannot ensure the same level of response within the community.

11 What is the estimated tax impact?

The estimated annual tax impact is $41.60 per $100,000 of assessed value. For the average New Berlin home assessed at $375,246, the estimated annual impact would be approximately $156 per year, which equates to about $13 per month.

12 Who decides whether the referendum is approved?

The Common Council will decide whether to place a referendum question on the ballot. If a question is approved for the ballot, New Berlin voters will decide whether to approve or reject the referendum.

? Additional Questions?

Presentation slides, meeting recordings, FAQs, and updates.

Visit *newberlinwi.gov/referendum*

email *CitizenComments@newberlin.org*

Scan to visit the referendum page:

STATE OF WISCONSIN CITY OF NEW BERLIN WAUKESHA COUNTY

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-14

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A REFERENDUM FOR THE CITY OF NEW BERLIN TO ALLOW THE CITY TO EXCEED THE STATE IMPOSED LEVY LIMIT BEGINNING WITH 2026 LEVY (COLLECTED IN 2027) AND ON AN ONGOING BASIS

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has imposed limits on town, village, city and county property tax levies under Wis. Stat. § 66.0602; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 66.0602 limits the increase in 2026 (collected in 2027) to the local property tax levy to no more than the greater of (a) 0% of last year's actual levy or (b) a percentage equal to the percentage change in equalized value due to new construction less improvements removed plus other exceptions like new debt service; and,

WHEREAS, the City of New Berlin actual levy in 2025 (collected in 2026) was $38,282,500; and, based upon the change in equalized value due to new construction less improvements removed plus new debt service, state law would limit the increase to $201,663 (0.762%) for a total allowable 2026 (collected in 2027) city tax levy of $38,484,163; and

WHEREAS, the City of New Berlin is presently served by 54 full-time Fire Department personnel and by 70 full-time sworn Police Department personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of New Berlin desires to add additional full-time Fire Department personnel to provide 24-7 coverage and to add additional full-time sworn Police Department personnel to provide more consistent 24-7 coverage; and

WHEREAS, the City's costs to provide these increased personnel would exceed the maximum allowable levy and, accordingly, the City Common Council believes it is in the best interest of the citizens of the City of New Berlin to exceed the state levy limit as described above by a greater percentage than allowed by statute for increased full-time staffing of the Fire and Police Departments;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council of the City of New Berlin, Waukesha County, do hereby support an increase in the City tax levy for 2026 (collected in 2027) to exceed the state levy limit. The Common Council intends that the levy increase be applied on an ongoing basis thereafter by including it in the base used to calculate the limit going forward.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Common Council directs that the question of increasing the city tax levy for 2026 (to be collected in 2027) by 8.11%, which would increase the city levy by $3,122,149 over the past year's levy, for a city tax levy of $41,606,312, shall be submitted to the electors in a referendum election to be held on November 3, 2026, in the following form:

Referendum Question

Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of New Berlin for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2027, is limited to 0.762%, which results in a levy of $38,484,163. Shall the City of New Berlin be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2027, and on an ongoing basis, for the purpose of increasing staffing in the police and fire departments and to purchase an additional vehicle and equipment to support those additional personnel, by a total of 8.11%, which results in a levy of $41,606,312, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of $3,122,149.00 in the base levy for each fiscal year going forward?

The results of the referendum shall be binding upon the City of New Berlin and certified to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, as required by Wisconsin Statutes Section 66.0602(4)(d).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Common Council directs that the following Explanatory Statement of the vote be used where required:

Explanatory Statement and Effect of Vote

The City of New Berlin is presently served by 54 full-time Fire Department personnel and 70 full-time sworn Police Department personnel. In order to add additional full-time staff to provide adequate response to a growing number of calls for service, the City’s costs would exceed the maximum allowable levy.

A “yes” vote allows the Common Council to exceed the state-imposed levy limits by $3,122,149 to provide additional funding to pay for expanded full-time staffing of the New Berlin Fire and Police Departments. The increased levy would apply on an ongoing basis thereafter by including it in the base used to calculate the limit going forward.

A “no” vote does not allow the Common Council to exceed the state-imposed levy limits to provide additional funding to pay for additional full-time staffing of the New Berlin Fire and Police Departments. The Fire and Police Departments would continue to be staffed in the same manner they are presently staffed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk shall provide the County Clerk with a certified copy of this Resolution so as to ensure that the referendum question can be placed on the November 3, 2026, election ballot for all wards within the City of New Berlin

RESOLUTION ADOPTED by the New Berlin Common Council this 13th day of August 2026.

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Kenneth A. Harenda II, Council President

Countersigned:

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Rubina R. Medina, City Clerk