



Governmental Body:
The City Council of Baxter, Iowa

Date of Meeting:
Thursday, November 13th, 2025

Time of Meeting:
6:00 P.M.

Place of Meeting:
Baxter Community Center

Call In Information:

**City Council Meeting – November 13, 2025,
6:00 PM (America/Chicago)**
Please join my meeting from your
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Mayor Doug Bishop called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were Milligan, Larson, Kunkel, Schabillon, and Smith. City Administrator/Clerk Battani, Deputy City Clerk Braye, and members of the public were also present.

Schabillon motioned to approve the agenda. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Milligan, Larson, Kunkel, Schabillon, Smith. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Larson. Ayes: Milligan, Larson, Kunkel, Schabillon, Smith. Motion carried. The consent agenda consisted of the minutes from the October 13, 2025, City Council meeting, financials, and claims.

The claims are as follows:

Vendor	Description	Price
Brick Gentry P.C.	Legal services	\$920.00
Cardio Partners	Medical/AED supplies	\$150.00
Chantel Maxwell	Reimbursement – meeting expense	\$21.00
Dorsey & Whitney LLP	Bond counsel services – West Ave II project	\$3,302.00
Ed Leedom	Code inspection services	\$699.60
First Net (AT&T)	Cell phone service – sewer/EMS	\$86.23
First Onsite	Restoration services	\$145,965.00
GEMT	GEMT program fee	\$620.61
IA Rural Water Association	Water system services/membership	\$11,250.32
Ingram Library Services	Library books and materials	\$413.06
Iowa One Call	Locate tickets	\$19.80
Jasper County Emergency Management	Emergency management services	\$1,443.00
Jasper County Sheriff	Law enforcement contract	\$32,604.00
John Deere Financial	Sewer department supplies	\$427.99
Kellogg Lawn & Snow	Mowing and grounds maintenance	\$920.34
Meckley Parts & Service	Street department vehicle repair	\$224.45
Menards	Street department supplies	\$54.99
Midwest Sanitation & Recycling	Garbage and recycling services	\$14,129.84
New Century FS	Fuel	\$278.20
Newton Daily News	Publishing – notices/ads	\$254.29
Newton Fire Department	EMS/Fire services	\$250.00
Quill Corporation	Office supplies	\$122.36
Sass + Soul	Community event/services	\$123.00
Shield Technology Corporation	Police software/services	\$200.00
Springer Professional Home Services	Pest control	\$53.90
US Cellular	Cell phone service	\$183.09
USIC Locating Services	Utility locating services	\$617.95
VC3, Inc.	IT services and support	\$1,868.30
Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield	Health insurance premium	\$2,796.03
Westrum Leak Detection	Leak detection services	\$800.00
Xerox Corporation	Copier lease/usage	\$123.70
Total		\$220,923.05

Fund	Revenues	Expenditures
001 GENERAL FUND	\$ 9,864.28	\$ 187,115.62
110 ROAD USE TAX	\$ 10,746.69	\$ 1,394.93
112 EMPLOYEE BENEFIT	\$ -	\$ 1,320.67
300/301 CAPITAL PROJECTS (West Ave II)	\$ -	\$ 3,302.00
600 WATER FUND	\$ 30,320.26	\$ 12,491.22
610 SEWER FUND	\$ 59,925.63	\$ 1,168.77
670 GARBAGE FUND	\$ 14,355.48	\$ 14,129.84
740 STORM WATER FUND	\$ 1,915.68	\$ -
TOTAL	\$127,128.02	\$ 220,923.05

Mayor Bishop provided an opening statement, noting that the Council had unanimously approved the request for a five-year audit in March 2024, and after that point, the process was in the hands of the State Auditor's Office. He stated that while some misinformation circulated in the community at that time, he did not wish to dwell on past issues or take a divisive approach. Instead, he emphasized the many positive steps taken by the current Council and staff, and expressed confidence that the City is on the right path forward. Bishop stressed that continued progress will require working together and encouraged the community to maintain trust in Baxter's potential.

Public Comments:

Councilmember Smith spoke during public comment to address concerns raised by community members regarding the state audit request. Smith noted the importance of holding each other accountable for how the City operates and agreed with Mayor Bishop that it is necessary to recognize where mistakes have occurred. Smith emphasized that the focus should be on learning from those mistakes and continuing to move forward together as a community.

City Administrator/Clerk Battani provided updates on several ongoing items. Battani reported that the City received an updated 12-month CD interest rate proposal of 3.37% effective December 1, 2025. The Budget Workshop is scheduled for November 20th, and staff are preparing the necessary materials. Battani noted new mandatory training requirements for council members issued by the Iowa Public Information Board, with virtual options to be provided through the Iowa League of Cities. The updated Employee Handbook is expected to be ready for Council review in January or February, and the municipal code update continues, with the codifier, staff, and the City Attorney working through final clarifications. A \$4,500 grant application for Restland Cemetery improvements has been submitted to Aureon, with award notifications anticipated in 2026. Battani also reported that a vendor is scheduled to inspect the electronic sign the following day to diagnose issues and provide repair options. Health insurance premiums will increase by 9.4% for the upcoming plan year, though the City's employee benefit levy is positioned to absorb the increase. Finally, the City is awaiting the outcome of the \$50,000 REAP grant and is exploring additional funding sources to cover the remaining \$65,000 needed for the trail project.

John Fatino, attorney representing Overland Group LLC, spoke in favor of the proposed Dollar General commercial project, noting the potential tax revenue benefits and encouraging the Council to proceed with the third reading of the rezoning ordinance in December. Amy Penquite of Nyemaster Goode, P.C., representing Brock and Robin Hansen, addressed the Council and requested that the City follow the Jasper County Engineer's recommendations for stormwater

management for the project. Resident Corey Robinson spoke about the disparity in Baxter's commercial tax base compared to neighboring cities such as Prairie City, Monroe, and Colfax, and stated that he supports the project because it would provide revenue to the school district and strengthen the community's commercial tax base. Robin Hansen commented that a former Iowa DNR employee had advised her it would be illegal for stormwater to flow south rather than west. Representatives from MSA Professional Services explained that updated stormwater calculations show the proposed design is compliant with City code and SUDAS standards, and that the revised calculations differ from the County Engineer's earlier figures due to differences in the scale and inputs used in the County's model. MSA noted that the proposed development would generate less runoff flowing south than the current undeveloped condition. Administrator Battani stated he would provide MSA's updated calculations to the Jasper County Engineer and to the Hansens for their review. The Council reiterated that the third and final reading of the rezoning ordinance will occur at the December council meeting. Milligan motioned to approve the second reading of the Plat of Survey for the Dollar General site, contingent upon final adoption of the rezoning ordinance. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Milligan, Larson, Kunkel, Schabilion, Smith. Motion carried.

Motioned by Smith to open the rezoning second public hearing. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Milligan, Larson, Kunkel, Schabilion, Smith. The public hearing opened at 6:42 pm. No public comments were made. Smith motioned to close the public hearing at 6:42 pm. Seconded by Larson. Ayes: Milligan, Larson, Kunkel, Schabilion, Smith. Motion by Smith to approve the second reading, and move to the third reading on December 10th. Seconded by Larson. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to approve Resolution 2025-63, approving a 28E Agreement with the West Malaka Benefited Fire District for Fiscal Year 2025–2026. Seconded by Larson. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Larson motioned to approve the FY2024–2025 EMS revenue and expense true-up between the Baxter Fire Department and the City of Baxter following the transition of EMS operations to the City. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Milligan, Larson, Kunkel, Schabilion, Smith. Motion carried.

Council discussed the potential purchase of the former grocery store building and reviewed alternative redevelopment options. Administrator Battani advised that the City could assist a private redevelopment project through available grant or interest-free loan programs for qualifying rural daycare providers. Seconded by Milligan. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Council reviewed the proposed FY2027 Budget Process Timeline. Milligan motioned to acknowledge receipt of the proposed timeline and to schedule the FY2027 Budget Workshops for December 8, 2025, and January 12, 2026. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Larson motioned to appoint Rhonda Murphy to serve the remainder of the term, through December 31st, 2029, on the Board of Adjustment. As well as Tony Kaster, to serve the remainder of the term through December 31st, 2029, on the Board of Adjustment. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to approve the hiring of Joyce Christianson as a part-time backup employee for the Baxter Public Library at a wage of \$13.00 per hour. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Smith motioned to approve Resolution 2025-60, approving submission of the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Financial Report to the State of Iowa. Seconded by Larson. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Smith motioned to approve Resolution 2025-61, adopting the updated Time Off Request Approval Policy, with a retroactive request limit of up to 2 business days, rather than 7 calendar days. Staff will also ensure that the time-off request includes language to protect the city from misuse of the two-business-day retroactive policy. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Milligan motioned to approve Resolution 2025-62, authorizing payment of the annual TIF rebate in the amount of \$14,500 to BEDCO. Seconded by Larson. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Schabilion motioned to approve the adjustment to the Community Center alcohol deposit, reducing it from \$500 to \$350. Seconded by Smith. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Council discussed two quote options for monthly cleaning services for City facilities. Milligan motioned to approve bringing the discussion back up during our first FY2027 budget workshop. Seconded by Larson. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

Kunkel motioned to approve the LCI quote. Seconded by Milligan. Mayor Bishop provided a report. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried.

City staff and Council reviewed the task list and provided updates.

Larson motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Schabilion. Ayes: Schabilion, Milligan, Kunkel, Smith, Larson. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.