

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2025 AT 07.45 A.M.

Present:

DP

Youri DE SMET (Mayor)

Marc LANG (Alderman)

Frank COLABIANCHI (Councillor)

Monique SMIT-THIJS (Councillor)

Francine MORO (Councillor)

Nadine PHILIPPE (Councillor)

Mariette GALLMEISTER (Councillor)

déi gréng

Roger MILLER (Alderman)

Stefan GLOBER (Councillor)

LSAP

Yolande SCHUSTER (Councillor)

CSV

Nadine SCHARES (Councillor)

Guy WEIRICH (Councillor)

Marc RAUCHS (Councillor)

Georges FRANCK (Municipal Clerk)

Sophie HUMBERT (Deputy Municipal Clerk)

Apologies received: /

AGENDA

In public session:

01. Approval of the agenda
02. Information and correspondence
03. Contracts
 - A. Commercial leases: Approval
04. Personnel management
 - A. Creation of a position for a municipal official
05. Town planning
 - A. Subdivision of one plot of land in Bertrange, 42 Cité am Bruch, into two plots
 - B. Subdivision of four plots of land in Bertrange, Rue des Romains, into five plots
06. Advisory and legal committees
 - A. Municipal Committee for Intercultural Coexistence: Appointment of an alternate member
 - B. SEA Advisory Committee: Change in composition
 - C. SEA Advisory Committee: Appointment of members
07. Les Parcs du Troisième Âge
 - A. Board of Directors: Appointment of a member
08. Office Régional du Tourisme
 - A. Appointment of a delegate
 - B. Appointment of an alternate delegate
09. Environment
 - A. Municipal regulation concerning the granting of subsidies to private individuals to promote sustainability, rational use of energy and natural resources, and the use of renewable energies in housing construction
10. Projects
 - A. Cost estimate for the refurbishment of the water treatment system of the swimming pool at Centre Atert: Approval
11. Traffic
 - A. Confirmation of emergency traffic regulations
12. Finances
 - A. Adjusted budget for 2025 and budget for 2026: Approval

In public session:

01. Approval of the agenda

Mayor De Smet asks if the Municipal Councillors approve the agenda.

The Municipal Council unanimously approves the agenda.

02. Information and correspondence

Mayor De Smet states that they have received SICA's waste report for 2024. For the municipality of Bertrange, residual waste amounts to 1,057 tonnes, corresponding to a weight of 118 kg per capita. There has also been a slight decline in residual waste compared with 2023. Regarding Valorlux, 168 tonnes was collected, corresponding to 18.71 kg per resident. For glass, the municipality, with 130 tonnes, or 21.4 kg per resident, was slightly below average, due to the fact that it can also be disposed of at the municipal recycling centre. With regard to participation rates, he wishes to point out that these are lower than in other municipalities. This is because the municipality has many apartment buildings and fewer single-family homes than other municipalities. At the municipality's own recycling centre, residents can dispose of green waste, paper and glass. Despite steady population growth, waste volumes are decreasing. This is the right path and one that must be pursued further.

Mayor De Smet goes on to say that the "Wantermaat" was a success despite the mediocre weather. He would like to thank the associations, the volunteers and the exhibitors for their efforts over the three days.

The population on the day of the meeting amounts to 9,473.

The treasury balance stands at 17 million euros.

03. Contracts

A. Commercial leases: Approval

Mayor De Smet notes that this item concerns three commercial leases. The fourth commercial lease will be put to the vote at one of the next meetings. Specifically, this concerns the Niessen butcher's shop, the Thym&Citron delicatessen and the fish shop. The rents are shown and have been calculated by area. These contracts will commence on 1 February 2026. The rent is being waived for three months to help the new businesses get off to a good start. The first payment will therefore fall due on 1 May 2026. Some lease agreements include a parking space; others opted against this. The term of the contracts is nine years.

This item is unanimously adopted.

04. Personnel management

A. Creation of a position for a municipal official

Mayor De Smet states that this concerns the creation of a position in career path B1 for the Personnel Department.

The Municipal Council unanimously adopts this item.

05. Town planning

A. Subdivision of one plot of land in Bertrange, 42 Cité am Bruch, into two plots

Mayor De Smet states that this item concerns one plot of land in Bertrange, in "Cité am Bruch". It is to be divided into two plots for subsequent development.

This item is unanimously adopted.

B. Subdivision of four plots of land in Bertrange, Rue des Romains, into five plots

Mayor De Smet states that this item concerns four plots of land located in Bertrange, on “Rue des Romains”. These are to be divided into five plots for future development.

This item is unanimously adopted.

06. Advisory and legal committees

A. Municipal Committee for Intercultural Coexistence: Appointment of an alternate member

Mayor De Smet states that Jelena Kristic has been unanimously elected as deputy member of the Committee for Intercultural Coexistence. She replaces Doris Karell.

B. SEA Advisory Committee: Change in composition

Mayor De Smet states that this item had already been adopted at the last meeting. However, a change in the composition is now proposed. This is due to the size of the SEA “Bei der Gemeng”, and it is therefore proposed that not just one but both heads be appointed to the committee.

This item is unanimously adopted.

C. SEA Advisory Committee: Appointment of members

Mayor De Smet announces that Jill Krier and Daniel Ferrari were unanimously appointed.

07. Les Parcs du Troisième Âge

A. Board of Directors: Appointment of a member

Mayor De Smet states that Pierre Weiland was elected as a member of the Board of Directors. He replaces Gabriella Damjanovic.

08. Office Régional du Tourisme

A. Appointment of a delegate

Mayor De Smet states that Roger Miller was unanimously elected as ORT delegate.

B. Appointment of an alternate delegate

Mayor De Smet states that Marc Lang was unanimously elected as Roger Miller’s substitute in the ORT.

09. Environment

A. Municipal regulation concerning the granting of subsidies to private individuals to promote sustainability, rational use of energy and natural resources, and the use of renewable energies in housing construction

Alderman Miller states that this item concerns the regulation on renewable energies. The cap is to be removed in future and the municipality wishes to align itself with the State. This means specifically that anything subsidised by the State is also taken into account in the municipality’s subsidy. For example, the

insulation of internal and external walls, the replacement of windows, etc. are all individually subsidised by the State, and the municipality then grants 25% of that amount. The same will now also apply to renewable energies such as heat pumps. In addition, it will now also be possible to combine the subsidies, which merely requires the statement of the Ministry of the Environment to be submitted with the application. This will then be checked by the relevant service. Insulated façades are also subsidised; however, this subsidy cannot be combined with the subsidy for façade renovations, as this is governed by a separate regulation. In this case, the subsidy is paid out within the respective maximum funding cap.

Mayor De Smet adds that citizens who received the State and municipal subsidy in 2025 will be contacted and paid the difference to ensure that no one is disadvantaged.

Councillor Weirich notes that his party welcomes this change; it is a step in the right direction as regards climate change. The increase is substantial. To illustrate the point, he wishes to give a specific example. If a person receives 24,000 euros from the State for the installation of a photovoltaic system, they will now receive 2,950 euros more from the municipality as a result of this amendment. Compared with the four neighbouring municipalities of the City of Luxembourg, however, Bertrange is not leading the way but lagging behind the others. There is still room for improvement here. Climate protection is an absolute priority and should therefore also be prioritised in the budget in order to get as many citizens as possible on board. Besides, it is also partly social policy. Owing to the retroactive effect already mentioned, no one will be disadvantaged. Thanks to the automatic reassessment of the applications, citizens will not need to submit a new application. Lastly, he wishes to ask whether an amendment could be made to Article 1, Section B. In his opinion, the text should be aligned with that used by the State, otherwise it is too restrictive.

Alderman Miller welcomes the CSV's opinion. Neighbouring municipalities such as Strassen also grant 25%, Mamer 35% and Hesperange 30%, although this is subject to a cap. In his view, 25% already makes a real difference. State subsidies are also still generous. Should these be reduced, the municipality could still increase its subsidy.

Mayor De Smet states that the municipality has the contact details needed to make the retroactive payment. This measure will lead to more applications; the necessary budget is available. State subsidies will also be subject to changes in future.

Councillor Schuster, on behalf of the LSAP, welcomes this amendment to the regulation. Councillor Weirich has already stated this explicitly, which is why she will not go into the details any further. She can only agree with Councillor Weirich that the new regulation will bring greater benefits for citizens and investments in climate protection will continue to be made. It is already difficult for many households to afford or build a home of their own. Such assistance allows private individuals to structure their finances differently if they want to build, while also encouraging those who already own property to invest in one installation or another.

Mayor De Smet adds that the State also supports less well-off citizens through the pre-financing arrangement.

This agenda item is unanimously approved, with the amendment proposed by Guy Weirich.

10. Projects

A. Cost estimate for the refurbishment of the water treatment system of the swimming pool at Centre Atert: Approval

Mayor De Smet states that this item concerns the cost estimate for the refurbishment of the water treatment system of the swimming pool at Centre Atert. Both the technical system and the IT system there are somewhat outdated. However, the biggest planned change is the switch to ultrafiltration. The advantages of this are better water quality, lower water and chlorine consumption and lower operating

costs. In addition, it is more compact, works automatically and has fewer sources of error. This accounts for the higher price of around 612,000 euros. Efforts are being made to plan the work in a way that disrupts normal operations as little as possible.

Councillor Schares notes that this kind of work becomes necessary sooner or later. Where water quality is concerned, costs should not be spared. How long will the work take, or will it be carried out in parallel?

Mayor De Smet states that the tenders are underway. It still needs to be clarified which work can be carried out in school periods and which will have to be undertaken during the summer months. They do not yet have a precise schedule for the overall implementation.

This item is unanimously adopted.

11. Traffic

A. Confirmation of emergency traffic regulations

Alderman Miller states that this concerns a temporary traffic regulation on Rue des Champs, effective from 1 to 13 December 2025.

Alderman Miller states that this concerns a temporary traffic regulation on Rue des Chênes, effective from 8 December 2025 to 8 June 2026.

Alderman Miller states that this concerns a temporary traffic regulation on Rue des Romains, effective from 8 to 17 December 2025.

12. Finances

A. Adjusted budget for 2025 and budget for 2026: Approval

Mayor De Smet states that they will now address the main and final item on the agenda, namely the presentation, discussion and vote on the adjusted budget for 2025 and the budget for 2026. He proposes the following speaking order: first the members of the majority, then the CSV, and finally the LSAP. After those contributions, the party spokespersons will be given the floor before the vote.

Mayor De Smet goes on to say that it is a great honour and pleasure for him to present the budget of the municipality of Bertrange today – a budget that has been drawn up in close consensus and in constructive cooperation between the College of Mayor and Aldermen and the relevant services. Every year, this moment is one of the key stages of local political work: It not only makes it possible to take clear stock of what has been successfully implemented, but also to highlight the projects that have been further developed this year with great commitment. At the same time, this budget offers an opportunity to look ahead: Strategic priorities are defined that are to guide the municipality's development in the coming years. This means that the municipality is not merely reacting to current challenges, but is deliberately investing in the future – with responsibility, transparency and, above all, foresight. Before turning to the budget itself, he would like to mention the political changes. Bertrange has a new College of Mayor and Aldermen, with two new Aldermen and a new Mayor. He would therefore like to thank his party, the party executive and the citizens of Bertrange, who have made it possible for him to take up this office. He also thanks Monique Smit-Thijs and Frank Colabianchi for the time during which they worked together so well on the College of Mayor and Aldermen. With nine of the 13 seats on the Municipal Council, corresponding to 66.65% of the votes entrusted by the citizens of Bertrange to the Democratic Party and déi gréng, his team has a broad and stable majority. For him, this majority is not just a number, but above all a mandate: the trust of a large majority of Bertrange's population, who expect the municipality to act responsibly, transparently and with an open ear for all residents. This makes it possible to make decisions that are in the interests of the municipality as a whole – constructively, sustainably and always with the future of Bertrange in mind. He also extends his sincere thanks to Frank Demuyser and Gaby

Damjanovic for the good relationship, following their withdrawal from the Municipal Council. He wishes them all the best for the future.

Mayor De Smet states that he made no secret of the fact that he wished to steer the affairs of the municipality together with a partner. Taking responsibility requires courage, team spirit and solidarity. With their colleagues from *déi gréng*, the Democratic Party has an ambitious partner on board with a shared goal: to serve the citizens of Bertrange. Some claim that times are turbulent and stormy in Bertrange and that the new College of Mayor and Aldermen has little experience to deal with this situation. But experience is not something one is born with – it is acquired through what one lives through in everyday life, through commitment, through solving problems and through learning from mistakes. That is precisely how the experience of the current College of Mayor and Aldermen is being built up. Through the many projects being advanced together, through the decisions taken every day and through the responsibility assumed each day to shape the municipality in a sustainable and modern way and develop viable solutions. He is convinced that it is not the number of years that matters. Much more, it is the ability to remain calm, to work with facts and truth, to act transparently and to make the best decisions in the interests of the citizens.

Mayor De Smet states that, with this budget, the municipality is creating the financial and structural foundations needed to continue strengthening citizens' well-being, maintain a high quality of life and further develop the municipality in a sustainable and innovative way. He will leave the detailed presentation to Marc Lang, Alderman and Chairman of the Finance Committee. As in previous years, he will explain the financial situation with precise figures. In the national and international context, one could almost say – perhaps somewhat exaggeratedly – that at local level this is a “peace budget”. A budget in which there is no need to debate rearmament or military defence. At European level, the reality looks different. The European Defence Agency is expecting defence expenditure for 2024 to reach 343.2 billion euros, rising to almost 400 billion euros in 2025. These developments are worrying and show how much the European peace project is under pressure, as well as how important a common, strong position and firm solidarity are for countering current threats. Sadly, peace and security are neither a matter of course nor free. At local level too, it is necessary to continue living and defending democracy, to set a good example and to take people's concerns and needs seriously. This can be done on many levels.

Mayor De Smet begins by noting that the municipality is in a very sound and stable financial position. This is not just a subjective opinion, but something that can be demonstrated by objective, politically neutral indicators, such as the ratio between ordinary income and expenditure, self-financing capacity, the debt level, the liquidity ratio and personnel costs. He would like to address the latter in more detail. The total wage bill will increase by around 2.4 million euros between 2025 and 2026. This increase is due to the recruitment of additional staff for the administration, the SEA and the technical service. There are plans to grow the total workforce from 146 employees at present to 162 by the end of 2026 in order to provide the citizens with high-quality support and efficient service. With the housing service, the environmental service, the Personnel Department, an events officer and a sports coordinator, the necessary steps have been taken to prepare for the future. In addition, the salary agreement also plays an important role. The linear increase in the index point value by 2.5% over two years has a significant impact on the budget. One thing should be mentioned in particular. This is now the 16th consecutive budget without any borrowing. This underlines the municipality's excellent financial position and shows that it is possible to decide on and make major investments without taking on new debt. Nevertheless, the municipality does not reject borrowing as a matter of principle. Should it become necessary for important projects in the interests of citizens and the locality, they will not hesitate to take out a loan.

Mayor De Smet continues by saying that one particular example is the “A Schwalls” project. Here, intensive work is continuing on a modern, high-quality residential and care complex that is intended not only to meet the highest standards, but also to remain financially accessible for the municipality's residents. The next steps are to obtain the ministry's approval in principle over the coming months, to adopt the preliminary draft design (APS) in the Municipal Council, and to finalise the detailed draft design (APD) and also submit it to the Municipal Council. Given the financial scale involved, legislation on State funding is also required; this is expected to be introduced in 2027.

In addition, the municipality is committed to modern, safe and sustainable mobility. It is therefore investing in the expansion of an efficient cycle and pedestrian network while, together with neighbouring municipalities, developing a strong regional mobility concept. The aim is to create a mobility system that meets today's needs while proactively responding to tomorrow's challenges. Several important projects will start in the coming year and new studies will be commissioned. A comprehensive study, costing around 50,000 euros, will analyse the existing cycling infrastructure and develop concrete proposals to improve links with neighbouring municipalities and make Bertrange even more bicycle-friendly. In parallel, a pedestrian guidance system will be installed and the results of the safe route to school survey will be presented to parents, including possible measures to improve safety even further. Around two kilometres of new cycle and pedestrian paths have already been created between Bertrange and Leudelange to improve links with neighbouring municipalities. Work on the new pedestrian and cycle bridge will begin next year and is budgeted at around 600,000 euros. Work on the underpass on Rue Charles Schwall and Cité am Wenkel will also continue, with construction scheduled to start in 2027. A central link between City Concorde and the village centre is also to be created, at a cost of around 770,000 euros. Overall, more than 12 million euros are earmarked over the next two years to promote active mobility. This is a clear commitment to making the municipality safer, more sustainable and more liveable.

Mayor De Smet states that the municipality is facing controlled population growth and is therefore investing specifically in a modern and functional school infrastructure. In order to make sound decisions for the future, a comprehensive analysis of the current situation has been commissioned. This covers both the quality of the existing buildings and the need for capacity and space, as well as a long-term projection for the next 30 years. It is important to clarify that school infrastructure of course also includes the SEA, sports infrastructure and music school. These elements form the basis for a clear strategy and the preparation of a master plan setting out short-, medium- and long-term priorities, which will cost around 50,000 euros. The aim is to create a school infrastructure that meets current requirements while safeguarding the interests of future generations. Specifically, renovation work amounting to around 220,000 euros is planned for the building on Rue de la Pétrusse in order to make the premises suitable for use as classrooms. This will create a total of eight additional classrooms. This process is not just about taking short-term measures, but about creating a solid decision-making basis that will make it possible to continue ensuring the necessary space over the next 20 to 30 years. Even if a number of scenarios have to be considered, this approach gives a clear picture of the direction to be taken in order to meet tomorrow's requirements.

Mayor De Smet explains that the current municipal workshops also play an important role in this context. Relocating them will free up a high-quality site in the village centre, creating a strategically important opportunity for sustainable and coherent planning. As always in Bertrange, this development process is to take place in close cooperation with the citizens. This development cannot be considered separately from the school infrastructure. The two must absolutely be coordinated. There is, however, one point he wishes to emphasise in particular: The municipality can count itself fortunate to have land available that it can potentially make use of. Even so, these future developments should not be rushed. The aim is rather to proceed with foresight and define a realistic financial plan setting out what can be implemented and when, without placing an excessive burden on future generations.

When he thinks about quality of life, Mayor De Smet says he is reminded of a budget speech by Frank Colabianchi, in which he asked what quality of life actually means for each individual. The answer is not straightforward. Even the 13 people in the room will all have different views on it. At its core, it is about subjective well-being – in other words, how comfortable a person feels in their surroundings. But what exactly is being done for the quality of life of children and young people in Bertrange? Alongside the new infrastructure, including the modern SEA and the Centre sportif Niki Bettendorf, with a total investment of almost 50 million euros, further projects are being implemented that directly benefit children and young people. In her contribution, Councillor Moro will speak about the work of the Family Committee and the important work being done within the SEA and will show the nice projects that are planned. In the area of play and leisure spaces, a clear strategy has been developed that is geared to the needs of all age groups and intended to strengthen quality of life in the municipality on a lasting basis. On the basis of a comprehensive analysis, the first priority projects have been included in the budget. The upgrading of Helfent Park is one of those priority projects. With a budget of more than 6 million euros, the municipality is making a targeted

investment in a multifunctional, inclusive and modern leisure facility. The aim is to create a space that appeals to all generations. The park will thus become a new meeting place, not only for the Helfent neighbourhood but for all families in Bertrange. In parallel, the other playgrounds are being modernised step by step. Work on the traffic garden on Rue des Aubépines will begin next year. A new playground for toddlers will be created in Cité Millewee. In the centre, they are planning the “Beiepad”, while in the forest, an educational themed trail with a footpath is being developed. These initiatives will be implemented gradually over the coming years and will form a coherent network of leisure offerings. In this way, the municipality is investing not only in infrastructure, but also in the well-being and future of its youngest residents.

Mayor De Smet states that another important initiative is the success in a call for projects aimed at promoting more nature in villages and towns, for which a local project was selected. With a budget of 500,000 euros, concrete measures could be implemented, such as desealing and creating a near-natural, educationally valuable school playground, particularly in view of increasingly hot summer months. In addition, the Children’s Council will continue to be actively involved in decision-making processes and can develop projects of its own. The Youth Council is also ready to get started and will be established in cooperation with the youth centre. The issue of housing for young people also remains an ongoing issue. With youth housing, the municipality is opening a new chapter to meet an urgent need and offer young people prospects for the future when it comes to housing. In addition to the existing structures on Rue de Dippach, the municipality will shortly rent a house in which four rooms will be made available to young professionals and students. All of these measures will help to ensure that Bertrange remains a municipality in which children and young people can grow up safe, free and happy, and in which quality of life is part of everyday life.

Mayor De Smet adds that several important housing projects will be launched in the coming year. Construction of the two semi-detached houses will begin and the Fonds du Logement apartment building will also be built. Two additional apartments have recently been acquired and will be moved into the affordable rental stock. The municipality is also assuming responsibility in the “Brill” PAP and has declared itself willing to help build – and, above all, to finance – seven houses and an apartment building with eleven residential units. Around 7.1 million euros has been earmarked for affordable housing for 2025 and 2026, some of which has already been invested.

With regard to the environment, energy and nature, Mayor De Smet explains that Bertrange will continue to be a municipality that consistently places nature conservation, environmental protection and climate action at the heart of its policies. With its decisions, the municipality is clearly showing that it is among the country’s pioneers in these areas. In view of the increasing risk of heavy rainfall and flooding, the municipality is investing in digital monitoring of the Pétrusse. This project was submitted under the “Smart Cities” programme and is breaking new ground. Work on the dam at the Hiermesweiher will continue, and they expect to be able to start the construction work next year. In addition, further risk-reduction measures will be implemented. At an information evening, which was recorded and can be accessed at any time on the municipality’s website, residents were shown what has already been implemented and which steps still lie ahead. Citizens were able to raise their questions and concerns. This open exchange is particularly important, as it is a complex subject for which there are no simple or quick solutions. Further information evenings are also planned for the future. At the same time, the municipality remains committed to the “Sponge City” concept in order to absorb and store rainwater more effectively and positively influence the microclimate. The Ministry of the Environment has already approached the municipality to view the first results of the study. With regard to energy, the subsidies for heat pumps, solar installations and photovoltaic systems have been increased. The municipality’s vehicle fleet is being gradually converted to electric cars, and two further vehicles will be replaced next year. Waste management also remains a key issue. At SICA, good progress is being made with the construction of the resource centre, where they are creating a modern infrastructure through which the municipality will continue to play a pioneering role and open up new opportunities. Bertrange is also committed to the Climate Pact and the Nature Pact and, with scores of 61% in the Climate Pact and 59% in the Nature Pact, is showing that it is pursuing an ambitious path. The excellent work with the forester and SICONA contributed significantly to this result. By joining the Office Régional du Tourisme, the municipality is strengthening its position in regional development. In this context, there will be a particular focus on improving signposting on hiking trails and cycling infrastructure in the coming years. These measures are crucial for increasing the municipality’s attractiveness, making it easier for citizens and tourists to find their way around, and ensuring that mobility

and leisure facilities are of a high standard. Having ambitions is one thing, turning them into concrete measures is another. However, this is precisely how Bertrange is being made fit for the future: sustainable, resilient and liveable.

With regard to commerce, Mayor De Smet explains that the range and proximity of services also play an important role in quality of life. Bertrange will continue to focus on the dynamic development of local commerce in order to improve the attractiveness and quality of life of the village centre. With the opening of four new shops in February and a total investment volume of 3.2 million euros, a further important foundation is being laid for a diverse range of local shops and services. In addition, healthcare services are to be established in the premises formerly occupied by the school doctor.

Mayor De Smet continues by saying that, following a demanding construction project on Rue de la Pétrusse and Rue de Dippach, which is now being completed for both streets, they are now taking the opportunity to also include Rue Rilsper in the work and to fully renew the sewer system. Around 7 million euros is being invested here in the underground infrastructure. Even though the municipality is aware that the quality of life of the residents concerned has suffered to some extent in recent months and years, this work was unavoidable. In a workshop for redesigning Rue Schauwenburg and Rue Lecker, citizens played an active part and contributed their ideas and proposals for what their street should look like in the future. This approach is applied systematically whenever infrastructure such as the sewer system is renewed. The results are now being analysed in order to drive forward and implement the planning process together with citizens. The same participatory process was carried out for Rue de Mamer, where initial measures have already been implemented and speeds have been reduced. This work is linked to a new rainwater corridor running through Rue de Mamer, via Rue des Romains and Cité am Pesch, to Rue du Chemin de Fer and finally to Rue de l'Industrie, where it will be connected to the Aalbach. This is a concrete and important measure aimed at directing rainwater in a targeted way rather than channelling everything into the village centre. In the redesign of these streets, the promotion of active mobility is also a top priority. More than 11 million euros will be invested here in the coming years. In this respect, the College of Mayor and Aldermen will not hesitate to undertake the necessary roadworks, even if they are not universally welcomed. Quality of life is not created only where it is visible in everyday life, but also underground, in the infrastructure that often remains unseen, such as the sewer system.

Mayor De Smet states that, last week, he had the great honour of welcoming His Royal Highness Grand Duke Guillaume and Her Royal Highness Grand Duchess Stéphanie to Centre Atert as part of the 'Soirée du Bénévolat'. This once again highlighted that the backbone of our society is made up of all those volunteers who place themselves at the service of others. Here too, the issue is one of quality of life and social cohesion. The municipality stands by its local associations and will continue to make further efforts in the years ahead to support and strengthen them. This year, premises in the "Duerfhaus" were made available to numerous associations. The minibus for associations will be available from January. The local "Soirée du Bénévolat" will also take place again in January, at which a number of new features will be presented to the associations. In future, the recognition of local athletes should also give greater consideration to culture and to individuals with special merits. Additional financial support is planned for sports clubs to enable them to take part in national or international tournaments. A good example of this is Klagenfurt, where clubs come together and new friendships are formed. Councillor Philippe will address the cultural sector in her contribution, an area in which the municipality has repositioned itself in recent years and significantly increased financial resources. Through these targeted measures, it is being made clear that volunteering is not merely a worthwhile initiative, but one of the supporting pillars that make Bertrange a vibrant, open and supportive municipality. That is precisely why it will remain a priority to acknowledge and promote this commitment, because the quality of life in a municipality is also reflected in the places where people are there for one another and commit themselves to society with conviction.

Mayor De Smet concludes by saying that the 2026 budget provides for numerous new projects, which are now being developed and implemented. The financial position is sound and the budget rests on stable foundations. Nevertheless, the municipality should remain cautious and plan future projects with foresight, always in line with the resources available. Cooperation within the Municipal Council should also continue to be characterised by collegiality, respect and constructive dialogue. A municipality like Bertrange can only move

forward if responsibility is assumed together, differences are discussed objectively and solutions are sought with foresight. He thanks all services that have contributed to this budget dossier. It is an important and complex document that has to be prepared every year. He then gives the floor to the Finance Alderman for the presentation and analysis of the figures for the adjusted 2025 budget and the 2026 budget.

Alderman Lang thanks Mayor De Smet for giving him the floor and states that he would like to provide information on the adjusted 2025 budget and the 2026 budget, taking into account the changes made following the meeting of the Finance Committee on 3 December 2025. As every year in December, the time has come once again: The budget debate is upon us. It is the key meeting of the year, at which the financial situation of the municipality of Bertrange is discussed, analysed and voted on. Everyone in the chamber agrees that sound and efficient financial management is crucial to the municipality's development, not only for external projects, but also for the internal functioning of the municipal administration itself. Before turning to the analysis of the figures, he would like, as he does every year, to briefly address the macroeconomic situation, which has a major impact on State revenue and thus also on that of the municipalities. In general, STATEC has had to revise its forecasts for 2025 downwards. GDP growth is now expected to be just 1%. This means that the economy is growing much more slowly than originally forecast. This is mainly due to geopolitical tensions, particularly wars and trade disputes linked to tariffs between the USA and the rest of the world. One positive sign, however, is the development of interest rates. Based on the European Central Bank's policy of bringing inflation down to 2%, key interest rates were reduced over the course of the year. This gave the property sector a noticeable boost, something that has also been evident in Luxembourg. Low interest rates also enable companies to obtain cheaper financing and invest more, which should have a positive effect on GDP. STATEC's forecast for 2026 is slightly better, but still moderate at 2%.

Alderman Lang notes that this provides a link to the circular issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on 23 October 2025, which summarises recommendations and information on the preparation of budget plans. In connection with the estimates for municipal business tax (ICC) and the municipal global endowment fund (FDGC), it is expressly pointed out that the figures depend on the general economic conditions. It is therefore important to manage finances prudently and responsibly. In drawing up the non-earmarked income in the adjusted 2025 budget and the 2026 budget, the percentages laid down in the circular were strictly adhered to. It should be emphasised that these are positive estimates.

It becomes clear how important this ordinary income is for the municipal budget. After deducting ordinary expenditure, this leaves a surplus that represents the available financial headroom, or self-financing capacity, needed to fund extraordinary expenditure without taking on new debt. It is important to stress that the ordinary budget is balanced, as this makes it possible to finance day-to-day operations. With regard to debt, the municipality is in a very good position. As at 31 December 2025, debt amounted to 2,728,690.58 euros, corresponding to debt per capita of 287.23 euros. For 2026, the amount is expected to fall to 1,907,190.04 euros as at 31 December 2026, or 194.61 euros per capita. The annual repayment amounts to 876,127.35 euros. The municipality's liquidity ratio is 1.15%. The maximum value permitted by the Ministry of Home Affairs is 20%. No new loans have been taken out in the last 15 budget years. Should a loan nevertheless become necessary in the coming years, it would be entirely manageable. Of course, only the amount actually required would be borrowed, following very careful consideration. According to a circular from the Ministry of Home Affairs, *"borrowing must be kept to the absolute minimum necessary; it may only be used to finance extraordinary expenditure if no other form of financing is possible or economically viable, and provided that regular repayment of the instalments is covered by the ordinary budget."* Any new loan would, of course, have to be approved by the Municipal Council.

Alderman Lang states that he will now move on to an analysis of ordinary expenditure. He will not list every single budget item, but will instead focus on certain areas of expenditure. He wishes to begin with the inter-municipal associations, which play an important role in everyday life. For the 2026 budget, investments in this area amount to 5,019,065.55 euros. The largest item is SICA, with 3,071,451.09 euros, made up of capital contributions of 1,680,451.69 euros and a contribution to operating costs of 1,391,000 euros. These are important investments, as the services provided are continuously expanding. This inter-municipal association now comprises eight municipalities with a total population of 45,000. In second place is CNI Les Thermes, which they operate jointly with the municipality of Strassen, with 1,350,000 euros for 2026. He also wishes to highlight the investment of 176,640 euros in the joint social welfare office in Mamer and the

importance of its services for people who are less well off in society. In the social sphere, he also wishes to highlight two further activities. First, "Youth and Work", with 35,000 euros, which helps young people enter the world of work; and secondly, the "Fir lech do" service, with 65,000 euros, which offers residents more than 60 local services close to home. The municipality will also finance development aid projects. In this context, an agreement has been signed with "What Water", under which 30,000 euros will be provided for the construction of two water towers in Cameroon.

Alderman Lang states that Bertrange also offers a lot in terms of events. At this point, he would like to sincerely thank all the associations for their commitment, both for the many events they organise themselves and for their support in events organised by the municipality. Voluntary work remains a major challenge, both for associations and for society as a whole. As a municipality, Bertrange expressly supports this engagement. A certain amount has been budgeted for the municipality's events. At the same time, each individual budget is closely monitored and potential savings, or even the discontinuation of some events such as "Surf in Town", are considered on an ongoing basis. Feedback from the people of Bertrange is very positive and all events are well attended by people of all generations. The committees and municipal staff are doing excellent work in this regard.

Alderman Lang explains that, in his capacity as President of the Committee for Intercultural Coexistence, he can definitely confirm this, and that these events are very well received. *Multiculti* and the *Soirée de bienvenue* have been flagship events for years, whereas the *Babbeltreff* and the *Soirées à thème* have been a complete success in their second year. The Pact for Living Together, signed jointly with the responsible ministry, opens up additional possibilities for being closer to citizens. A total of 1,650,000 euros has been earmarked in the 2026 budget for these four events, without taking ordinary income into account. In addition, one extra member of staff will be recruited to strengthen the cultural and events service. In the area of older citizens, 585,000 euros has been earmarked in the 2026 budget, including 175,000 euros for municipal staff. Expenditure for the youth centre amounts to 310,000 euros. For the BERTI on-demand bus service, a total of 315,000 euros has been earmarked for two minibuses. Together with the municipality of Strassen, this will bring the total to four vehicles operating across both municipalities.

Alderman Lang points out that the range of tasks covered by a municipality is becoming increasingly diverse and complex. This requires qualified and motivated staff. At 16,287,964.24 euros, the gross payroll for 2026 will therefore be 2,421,108.77 euros higher compared with the adjusted 2025 budget. There has been an increase of 17% here. The total payroll ratio stands at 24%. By comparison, the benchmark for comparable municipalities is 34%. The workforce will increase from 146 employees in 2025 to an expected 162 employees in 2026. As regards extraordinary expenditure, he wishes to highlight the four commercial units on the ground floor of the *Eva Maria et Albert* apartment building. These are due to be occupied from February/March 2026. The investment here amounts to 3,200,000 euros.

The SEA, which has been in operation since September, represents a total investment of 28,775,000 euros and is an investment in the future of Bertrange's children. Alderman Lang explains that the building, which is equipped to the highest technical standards, offers children and staff optimal conditions, so that they feel comfortable there. As regards the playgrounds in the village, a study was commissioned from Papaya to take stock of the current situation. It was decided to tackle several playgrounds, as they no longer meet current requirements. The idea is that, when redesigning them, the ages of the children will also be taken into account, so that different locations offer specific attractions tailored to the respective age group. A traffic garden for younger children will be created at Rue des Aubépines. There, very young children will be taught traffic rules in an interactive way. 570,000 euros is being invested in this. In addition, provisions have also been made in the 2026 budget for the renewal of the playground in Cité Millewee. Here, they will work together with the company "Erlebnisplan". 30,000 euros has been earmarked. In addition, a very important project is planned in Park Helfent. The park is to be completely redesigned. There are plans for various areas where young and old alike can pursue their leisure activities. The total investment amounts to 5,800,000 euros. Further investment will also be made in the expansion of cycle paths (Bertrange–Dippach section with 150,000 euros, and the footpath along Route de Longwy from Bertrange towards City Concorde with 920,000 euros). In the context of soft mobility, a pedestrian bridge from Rue Aline Mayrisch de St Hubert to Cité Eechels and an underpass from Rue Charles Schwall to Cité Am Wenkel are also planned. This corresponds to total

investments of 10.6 million euros in the coming years (overpass 6,430,000 euros / underpass 4,212,000 euros). Furthermore, 2026 also includes plans to acquire additional housing for affordable living (1,500,000 euros). In addition, an amount has been set aside for the purchase of land (1.5 million euros) and for land swaps. In the revised 2025 budget, an amount of 7,100,000 euros has been earmarked, of which 5,900,000 euros relates to the exchange of an area on the ground floor of the Eva Maria et Albert apartment building for a plot of land on Rue du Chemin de Fer. The amount relating to this land swap also appears in the adjusted budget, meaning the two items offset each other.

Alderman Lang states that he would like to briefly address the underground infrastructure investments. For 2026, 5,788,449.59 euros has been budgeted for the sewer system (Beggen wastewater treatment plant, camera inspections, maintenance of the sewer system, Helfenterbréck pumping station). The investments in the water network amount to 1,185,000 euros. In addition, investments of 1,370,000 euros are planned for flood protection measures. This brings the final amount to 8,343,449.59 euros; in the adjusted 2025 budget, it was 5,986,403.47 euros, representing 37% of the ordinary expenditure. It is also interesting to look at the last five years: Total investment amounted to 23,905,662.27 euros. This clearly shows that the amounts involved in this area are also substantial.

To conclude, Alderman Lang wishes to note that the municipal finances are sound. Many projects are in preparation, both above and below ground. At the same time, targeted investment is being made in municipal staff in order to continue providing a high-quality service for citizens. He sincerely thanks all staff for their daily commitment, especially Sophie Humbert, Alain Kariger and Christian Cloos for their excellent work in preparing the budget and investment analyses.

Mayor De Smet thanks Alderman Lang for this detailed analysis of the budget and gives the floor to Councillor Moro.

Councillor Moro states that she would first like to express her sincere thanks to the College of Mayor and Aldermen, which has always supported them, has always been there for them and will continue to be in future. This year, the Family Committee has set itself an important and long-overdue goal: to make inclusion in Bertrange more visible, more comprehensible and, above all, more relevant to everyday life. The municipality is firmly convinced that a strong community can only emerge if every person feels seen, respected and accepted. Regardless of a person's abilities, of where they come from or the pace at which they live, everyone should have a place here. It was therefore decided to consciously create projects and moments this year that place the topic of inclusion centre stage. Moments that raise awareness, build bridges and show how enriching and warm-hearted a diverse community can be. The aim is not just to talk, but to act, through activities, enthusiasm and the togetherness that characterises Bertrange. Being inclusive does not mean doing something additional or extraordinary. It simply means approaching one another with open eyes and an open heart. It means recognising that differences are not an obstacle, but rather a strength, something that makes our community richer, more flexible and more humane. In this context, a charity dinner has been organised, an event that not only serves a good cause, but also provides a wonderful opportunity to bring together people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Public figures from across the country made their artworks and creations available, which were sold during the evening in a silent auction. An amount of 6,000 euros was raised on the night for the "Association Thérapie Equestre".

Councillor Moro continues by saying that the population was invited to a "Journée de l'Inclusion", a full day dedicated to raising awareness and learning about inclusive initiatives. The response to this event was very positive. Visitors not only turned out in large numbers, but also took part with great interest and enthusiasm in the workshops led by professionals and stakeholders in the area of inclusion. They tried things out, asked questions, joined in and showed a real openness to new perspectives. The presence of Minister Max Hahn was a particular sign of appreciation, as his attendance underlined the importance of inclusion for the country and the level of support these initiatives enjoy at national level. The fifth edition of Family Day this year was once again a complete success. It has become a firm fixture in the calendars of many families and is well known far beyond the boundaries of Bertrange. The municipality is particularly pleased that this day attracts families from across the country who want to celebrate together. The day is all about the children, of course. They threw themselves enthusiastically into the many activities prepared for them. They especially enjoyed the

performances by Jonn Happi and DJ Dee Minque, during which they did not merely listen, but actively sang along, danced and joined in. It was also wonderful to see how diverse the visitors were this year. This shows how attractive and open the municipality is, and that such events help to strengthen community spirit regardless of origin or language.

Councillor Moro states that the babysitting course for young people took place on 24 and 26 November 2025. As in previous years, this course was again a great success, with 14 participants. On 10 December 2025, as part of Orange Week, a film screening (*Hors d'haleine*) was organised, followed by a panel discussion in collaboration with MEGA (Ministry for Gender Equality and Diversity). It was an interesting discussion round with around 50 participants. The Family Committee is already working intensively on plans for the coming year. The aim is to maintain the dynamic energy from this year and provide new impulses. As part of the International Day of Women's Sport in January, the Family Committee will therefore organise a panel discussion together with the Sports Committee, at which well-known figures from women's sport will be welcomed. They will speak about their experiences, challenges and successes, thereby providing valuable perspectives that are relevant not only to female athletes but to society as a whole. In addition, they wish to start an "Evening Walk" exclusively for women. This initiative is to take place in a convivial, relaxed setting and offer women the opportunity to exercise, exchange ideas and get to know one another. They hope that this first meeting will develop into a permanent and well-attended activity. The now traditional Family Day is planned again in June, along with a new edition of the babysitting course during the year in cooperation with the Bertrange youth centre.

Councillor Moro states that they do not wish to rely solely on the tried-and-tested. A "MensDay" is therefore being added to the programme, with the aim of offering a well-organised and enjoyable evening. This initiative is also intended to shine a spotlight on the issues and lived realities of men and boys, and to offer them a space to interact, relax and spend time together. The following year, a day is planned that will be entirely dedicated to women, a day on which the roles, achievements and participation of women in our society will take centre stage. The municipality will also take part in Orange Week again next year. Through this commitment, they wish to continue sending a clear signal against violence and in favour of equality – a subject that is particularly close to the hearts of both the committee and the municipality. She wishes to say a big thank you again this year to the members of the Family Committee, the SEA staff and the technical staff and caretakers, who have always supported these events with great commitment and reliability. Her special thanks also go to all the volunteers. Without them, it would simply not be possible to carry out such important and vibrant projects in the municipality. Their commitment makes a decisive contribution to the great success of these initiatives.

With regard to the SEA, Councillor Moro wishes to raise the following point: On 19 September 2025, all Municipal Councillors attended the inauguration of the new SEA building "Bei der Gemeng" in the presence of Minister Claude Meisch. The children and staff have settled in well and are delighted with the new structure. The exchange of information with parents remains unchanged and continues to take place via the DIMMI app. The activities prepared by the SEA staff alongside the teaching organisation not only include LASEP, but also "Sport – gemeinsam aktiv" and, since last year, kickboxing. The forest project was also initiated this year, under which the children go into the forest every Friday at 4 p.m. and then receive a small snack in the chalet. Whenever possible, a small campfire is also lit. This activity is so popular with the children that it will also take place during the holidays and on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. In cooperation with Co-Labor, the "Kinder-Garten" project will be implemented next year on the site between the school building "Beim Schlass" and the "Bureck". Other skills of the children are also being fostered. For example, they cook together once a week and new technologies such as 3D printing are tried out. In Cycle 4.2, great importance is attached to cooperation with the youth centre in order to make the children's future transition there easier. A new and very interesting project area is also being supervised by three educators and bears the name "Cool down". As part of this, the children learn various relaxation techniques, something that is particularly valuable in our fast-paced times. The SEA continues to be represented on the Children's Council by two educators. In addition, they participate in numerous municipal events such as MultiCulti, Family Day, Nuit des Sports and the Christmas market. Each year, they donate all their takings to a good cause. With a total of 66 staff members caring for the children of Bertrange, the SEA is a lively, welcome and child-friendly service that the municipality can be proud of. She therefore wishes to take this opportunity, on behalf of the entire Municipal Council, to sincerely thank the management and all SEA staff for the valuable work they do each day.

To conclude, Councillor Moro would like to quote Minister Meisch, who put it perfectly: “We would all like to have been children here in Bertrange in 2025.”

Mayor De Smet thanks the Family Committee for the work it has done, as well as all SEA staff. He gives the floor to Councillor Philippe.

Councillor Philippe states that she would now like to take stock of what was achieved in Bertrange in the area of culture in 2025, while also looking ahead to some of the projects planned for 2026. It had been a key concern of the members of the “Entente culturelle” to ensure that Bertrange’s cultural associations enjoy greater visibility and that their planned events reach the public more easily. Those responsible within the municipality have responded to this wish. Every Bertrange association can publish its events free of charge on the public screens, and flyers for the events are distributed by post at the municipality’s expense. Last year, she announced here that she personally would like to see a culture day, a kind of open day that could be organised by the local associations together with the support of the municipality. This will now take place in February 2026 in the form of a rally, the so-called “Kulturrallye”. The aim is to introduce Bertrange’s cultural associations to the pupils of the UGDA Regional Museksschoul Westen and their parents. During the morning, they will be accompanied by their music teachers to the premises of Bartrenger Musek, the Chorale Sainte Cécile and Just Music. There, they will be offered mini-concerts, can actively participate, receive information on the individual associations and have the opportunity to sign up directly on site for one or more associations. The Kulturrallye will be organised in close collaboration with UGDA, whom she would already like to sincerely thank at this point. Learning music and practising alone at home is one thing; singing and making music together and thereby playing an active part in Bertrange’s cultural life is quite another. It enriches society and local life together. The “Entente culturelle” represents the unity of Bertrange’s cultural associations and seeks to bring culture closer to local residents through their joint efforts.

Councillor Philippe explains that, in 2025, the Culture Committee organised the sixth edition of “BAYOTA – Bertrange Young Talents”. This event has become an established part of cultural life in Bertrange, is known well beyond the municipality’s boundaries and is now an integral part of the local cultural programme. In a wide range of competitions and workshops, young people with an interest in culture can demonstrate their talents. The standard of the competitions is high. Some participants in the film competition had already won national prizes and distinctions. The winner of the “Young Soloist Vocal 2025” competition in the 12–17 age category had progressed very far in the television programme “The Voice Kids Portugal”. Another winner is among the eight finalists in this year’s preliminary round of the “Luxembourg Song Contest 2026”. Participant numbers are steadily increasing. For the seventh edition in 2026, BAYOTA will therefore be expanded to include a new competition, namely a piano competition. At this point, in addition to expressing her sincere thanks to the members of the Cultural Committee for the excellent and collegial cooperation, she would also like to expressly thank the Luxembourg Film Federation, which organises BAYOTA’s film competition in close cooperation with the municipality of Bertrange. It also recently made possible a wonderful evening at the Arca under the theme “Award-Winning Movies 2023/2024”.

Councillor Philippe states that the College of Mayor and Aldermen has tasked her with filling Schauwenburg with art and life and, more generally, with giving art in Bertrange more space and visibility. Together with the Cultural Committee, a total of six very different art exhibitions were organised at the Schauwenburg over the course of 2025. A platform was provided for a range of artistic styles and for both renowned artists and newcomers to exhibit their work in Bertrange. The exhibitions were consistently very well attended, the exhibitors were extremely satisfied and, according to feedback received, the visitors were also impressed. Some of the vernissages were made especially appealing through decorative elements, light refreshments, video streaming and artists working live on site. This format is to be maintained and, where appropriate, expanded further. From 2026 onwards, the vernissages will also be made accessible to the general public in order to facilitate direct exchange between artists and visitors and foster a lively dialogue.

Councillor Philippe states that support for young talent runs like a common thread through Bertrange’s cultural policy. It was therefore a great honour and pleasure to give the 12-year-old Arty D a platform for his first proper exhibition at Schauwenburg. This exhibition was a complete success and even led to a very nice report

on RTL, further proof that Bertrange's cultural life is also receiving national recognition. Of course, the traditional funfair exhibition in the Schauwenburg was not to be missed either. Since this year, the pictures from BAYOTA's "D'Jugend moolt" competition have also been exhibited in the Schauwenburg, which contributed to enhancing the profile of this competition. A big thank you also goes to the "Bartrenger Geschichtsfreñn" for their exhibition on Bertrange in the Second World War. Especially in the current unstable global political situation, this highly moving exhibition was of great significance. The "Geschichtsfreñn" also took on a new cultural project with great commitment. When approached, they immediately agreed to write texts about the local sculptures. In doing so, they are laying the foundations for the first section of the cultural trail, the so-called "Skulpturenpfad". It will be inaugurated in the first half of 2026 and gradually expanded in the coming years. At this point, she wishes to return briefly to Maison Schauwenburg. Three exhibitions are already firmly scheduled for 2026: a photography exhibition, as well as two further art exhibitions by well-known Luxembourg artists. In keeping with this, the wildlife photographs displayed along the "Butzenhaus" and "Prince Sébastien" schools, which had suffered considerably from the weather, will be replaced in 2026. The municipality is already in contact with a photographer about this. A further big thank you, including on behalf of the municipal authorities, goes to Dany Unger, who donated two extremely valuable and aesthetically remarkable works by her late father, the renowned contemporary artist Arthur Unger, to the municipality. These works will be given a place of honour in the municipality.

Councillor Philippe states that, in March 2025, an impressive work of art by Chantal Maquet, commissioned by the municipality, was also unveiled in the foyer of the ArcA. The "Ball der Künste" portrays well-known figures and scenes from literature, art and music. It should also be noted that Chantal Maquet was awarded the 'Prix Grand-Duc Adolphe' this year and received the 'Pierre Werner Prize' in 2022. In addition, a new sculpture will be unveiled in the Bertrange Duerfngaart in 2026.

Councillor Philippe states that, since 7 May 2025, the ArcA has been one of the 24 member venues of the Luxembourg Theatre Federation. In addition, on 25 June 2025, the College of Mayor and Aldermen signed an ethical charter with the Ministry of Culture. In September 2026, the municipality's cultural officer, Jeff Lenert, will be present with a stand at the theatre festival on Place d'Armes to promote the ArcA. In addition, new approaches will be taken to raise the ArcA's profile beyond the boundaries of Bertrange. In 2025 alone, the ArcA programme featured 13 high-quality productions. New technology, a modern lighting system and targeted refurbishments in the foyer have significantly increased the ArcA's appeal for national and international productions. Fifteen productions are already scheduled for 2026, including theatre, dance, concerts, magic, cabaret and opera. It is a matter of great importance to the cultural officer to offer a varied and wide-ranging programme and to provide a stage for both international artists and Luxembourg performers. The ArcA is even planning its first in-house production for 2027. Her final heartfelt thanks therefore goes to Jeff Lenert, the municipality of Bertrange's cultural officer, whose professionalism, creative ideas and tireless commitment have played a key role in establishing the ArcA as a renowned cultural venue.

Mayor De Smet states that both the College of Mayor and Aldermen and the Municipal Council are keen for ArcA to provide a platform for greater diversity. He therefore joins in thanking Jeff Lenert on behalf of everyone and gives the floor to Councillor Gallmeister.

Councillor Gallmeister notes that people in society are getting older and that the demographic shape has long ceased to be a pyramid, resembling more of a mushroom. There are more older people and fewer children and young people. This is no different in Bertrange. Older residents aged between 60 and over 100 account for more than 20% of the population. For older people and for people with disabilities, the municipality of Bertrange has already been providing a range of services for many years. This includes the 50+ Committee, which deals with the key concerns of older people. It organises talks, an annual excursion and a Christmas party. Due to strong interest, it will also organise a two-day New Year celebration for the first time in January 2026. This will enable more people to take part. In addition, a barbecue lunch also took place in the village park at the beginning of the summer, a tradition that will continue in 2026. Furthermore, the senior citizens' fair at Centre Atert is organised every two years, and will be held again next year. She sincerely thanks the ladies on this committee. The "Club am Schlass" has also become an indispensable part of community life. Special thanks also go to Mandy Zilli and Sharon Welter, who carry out their work with great dedication. They organise courses, talks, dance afternoons, film screenings, excursions and trips, all of which primarily benefit

retired residents. There are also plans for a cosy afternoon gathering without an elaborate activity programme, where people can meet over coffee and cake – a simple initiative with a big social impact. In addition, the municipality offers four other practical services that benefit older people in particular. One of these is “Berti”, the municipality’s on-demand bus service, which is now made available in cooperation with the municipality of Strassen with four vehicles and double the capacity, as demand has been very high. On request, it will also travel to the CHL. The municipality also offers the well-known meals on wheels service, which supplies around 30 customers each month. Support at home is also available in the municipality, whether through “Help” or “Verbandskëscht”, which offer assistance with personal care, wound care and similar needs. Solina, an assistance service offering help in the home, with laundry or with gardening work, is also active in the municipality. In its agreement with Solina, the municipality of Bertrange has increased the maximum duration to 20 hours per household per month and covered part of the cost, so that it can be offered to citizens at an affordable price. Users of this service have been very satisfied so far.

Councillor Gallmeister states that these services enable many people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. If that is no longer possible, there is still the option of moving into a P3A apartment or into a retirement or care home. Bertrange needs a larger and more modern retirement or care home. The Municipal Council recognised this years ago and decided to build a new home. The planning details are becoming increasingly concrete and it will not be long now before this major project can be launched. Citizen’s birthdays are celebrated in every retirement home. The municipality of Bertrange also remembers the birthdays of its older citizens. There are plans for a joint celebration for everyone whose birthday it is, as well as for jubilees such as golden or platinum wedding anniversaries, even if putting the idea into practice may prove challenging. On request, the College of Mayor and Aldermen also pays personal visits to residents celebrating their 90th, 95th or 100th birthday. Not all people aged between 60 and over 100 are affected by dementia or in need of care, as is sometimes assumed. Many are still very active and, even at the age of 90, are still driving, doing sport, pursuing hobbies and actively socialising. For this reason, the 50+ Committee is planning to set up a municipal council for the “young people of yesterday”, similar to the Children’s Council and the Youth Council, so that people over 60 can raise their concerns directly. A society is measured by the way it treats its most vulnerable members – children and older people. It is therefore important to invest specifically in the third and fourth stages of life in Bertrange as well. This is something we owe to the older generation, and it is also entirely justified from a social perspective. Older residents and their families are grateful for this commitment.

Mayor De Smet endorses Councillor Gallmeister’s remarks and gives the floor to Councillor Glober.

Councillor Glober would first like to express his sincere thanks to Sophie Humbert and Alain Kariger, as well as to the Nature and Environment Committee with Francine Moro and Claude Schroeder, and to Véronique Linden, who is now acting as an important link, particularly in connection with the Climate Pact. All planned activities are in line with the coalition agreement. In doing so, the municipality consistently pursues the principle that, in the long term, compensation always costs more than forward-looking, sustainable planning and project implementation. In the area of environmental and nature protection, key topics have already been discussed in the Municipal Council, including the collaboration with SICONA. More than 50% of the corresponding budget has been subsidised by the State. The new forestry management plan was also already presented to the Municipal Council in November. The need for finances in this area is growing all the time, as climate change poses a major challenge for our forests. Sustainable forest management and the municipality’s own use of timber clearly take precedence over timber sales alone. Another important pillar is the Nature Pact. At present, the municipality has a score of more than 50% and has thus achieved bronze status. It expects to exceed 60% from June 2026 onwards and reach silver status. Special attention is being given to activities enabling broad participation by residents of all age groups. Thus, the inauguration of the “Kannerbësch” took place in November 2025 and will be continued annually as part of the “Journée de l’arbre”. Directly next to it, the “Schoulbongert” is being created. The SEA also regularly organises nature tours on Fridays. With the new discovery trail, a themed nature path, the municipality is investing around 55,000 euros in environmental education and experiencing nature. The renaturing of the Beiestack schoolyard is another flagship project, with an investment volume of 500,000 euros.

Councillor Globber notes that the flower meadows continue to be very well received, with a deliberate focus on plants that have high biodiversity value. This commitment is complemented by initiatives such as the perennial plant packages and the “Grouss Botz”. Following the Tiny Forest in Eechels, which was implemented in November 2025, further projects will follow, such as the “Millewee” Tiny Forest, a new bee trail and a climate garden. The “Natur Doheem” project, which replaces the former flower competition, is also setting new priorities: The focus is on sustainability, biodiversity and the growing of fruit and vegetables. It gives families the opportunity to present their own gardens. This will be complemented by information events in April and October, offering all citizens practical inspiration and guidance, such as on pesticide-free gardening or winter-proof garden design. In the area of mobility, expanding safe cycling infrastructure is the top priority. An external master plan for cycling infrastructure is currently being developed. The aim is to provide safe links between the centre, Millewee, Pourpelt, Helfent, A Laangert and other neighbourhoods. Plans also include the footpath to City Concorde, the cycle path to Dippach and new overpasses and underpasses between Rue Charles Schwall and Cité am Wenkel and between Rue du Chemin de Fer and Cité Eechels, which will benefit pedestrians, cyclists and people with reduced mobility.

Mayor De Smet thanks Councillor Globber for his remarks and adds that the good cooperation with the forester continues to produce nothing but positive results. There is also a desire to raise children’s awareness of environmental issues from an early age, something that has also been achieved with the “Tiny Forest” project. The link between the centre of Bertrange and Route de Longwy will provide a safe connection for pedestrians in the future. He gives the floor to the CSV.

Councillor Schares thanks the Mayor for giving her the floor. She notes that, at first glance, a budget document may seem to be merely a document of figures, but behind those figures lie projects, work and responsibility. Everyone has their role to play in assigning the right figures to the right budget items, making sure everything adds up and checking that it is all in order. She therefore wishes to thank everyone involved in drawing up this document. Without a budget, a municipality could not function. The 2025 budget document had been available on the municipal website for all interested citizens, so she assumes this will also be the case for the 2026 budget. A summary from some of the committees has been heard. However, the role of the opposition is now to scrutinise the budget document, analyse it, ask questions and not simply accept everything at face value. Alderman Lang has already mentioned many details. Income such as “impôt commercial” and the “fonds de dotation globale des communes” obviously helps to support the budget. She is happy to let the statement that the budget is healthy stand as it is. However, if one looks at the figures for the last three years, the reserve shows a downward trend. At the end of 2024, the municipality had reserves of 14 million euros. These will have fallen to 7 million euros by the end of 2025, and to 1 million euros by the end of 2026. In previous years, graphical overviews of various areas have also been provided for illustration, which made things very clear. This year, that is not the case, and particularly with regard to staff costs, it is not possible to form any clear idea. The ordinary running of a municipality – water, sewerage, electricity, refuse disposal, heating, buildings and maintenance – represents an enormous cost item that has to be covered and borne. That is undisputed. However, beyond day-to-day operations, there are also many other issues, and she now wishes to address some of them.

Councillor Schares states that the Municipal Council had been told that the municipality would be ready to broadcast the December budget meeting, but that does not appear to be the case, which she finds regrettable. Besides the broadcast, the municipal newsletter was the means by which people could inform themselves about what has been discussed and decided at Municipal Council meetings. As a result of the broadcast, the internal regulation had to be amended. That amendment also provided for only the summary, together with the respective decision, to be published, while completely removing the various statements made by the opposition, on the grounds that the broadcast would now be available. For her party, this is no argument, as not everyone is in a position to make use of it. As a result, only the facts would be presented and citizens would no longer be able to follow the arguments leading to a decision. She is therefore all the more pleased that the opposition’s concerns have been taken seriously and that the report will continue to be published in its current form. She welcomes the intention to give the municipal newsletter a different format. In her view, it should be informative and clear, reflect village life and also keep people up to date on various projects and studies – not with long texts, but with comprehensible pictures and graphics.

First, Councillor Schares wishes to address a number of points for the extraordinary expenditure. What happened with the study on redesigning the reception area in the town hall? What were the findings? Will anything concrete now be implemented? After all, this redesign had been intended to improve security, so that no one could move about the building freely. She welcomes the themed trail project. This is something she has been calling for for some time: an attractive, interactive walking trail in the “Ënneschte Bësch” with an interesting theme. In the ordinary budget, the “Beiepad” project is also included with an allocation of 20,000 euros. Where exactly is it planned? How far have they got with the camera inspection of the sewer system, and by when is it expected to be completed? Only half of the planned budget has been used for this. How far has the flood warning pilot project progressed? What exactly is being implemented there? What is the current status with the semi-detached house project in Cité am Wenkel? Almost the entire 2025 budget is being carried over to 2026. Is there a problem somewhere, and what is the current state of play? As regards the playground concept, a study has been carried out on this. During the last budget debate and then later at a Municipal Council meeting, when a project for a new playground was presented, she had asked about the results. These had been presented to the Municipal Council at a working session in September. She considers it important, if such a study is already available, to draw on it in order to identify weak points and base their actions on that study. While on the subject of playgrounds: What is the problem with the inclusive playground by the tennis courts, given that it is closed more often than it is accessible? She would also like to make a brief remark about the Shared Space. At 270,000 euros, the cost of greening the Shared Space was substantial.

In addition, they did not receive a second cost estimate.

Above all, even more parking spaces have now been created. Instead of parking between the tree planters, which is no longer possible, people now simply park in a full line in front of the trees.

Councillor Schares states that she also has a number of questions about the cycle paths. Where exactly are they at with each project? What has been implemented this year and what specifically is planned for 2026? The same applies to the “A Schwalls” project. Where are they heading? 2.5 million euros has already been invested. A further 2.4 million euros has been earmarked in the budget. How will the whole thing be managed later on? The citizens want information. They were shown the project design and models, but the flow of information then dried up. As regards Centre Atert, it is regrettable that the façade now needs to be renewed, but there was no way around it in its present condition. There was also still an amount of 650,000 euros earmarked for air-conditioning. This is probably necessary, because it gets very warm in summer, but on normal days it is often too cold. Will this also resolve the problem with the roof hatches? It has often been far too warm in the function room. The installation of air-conditioning to deal with the heat is therefore a good thing.

Councillor Schares notes that she also has a number of questions about extraordinary income. Has the matter of the insurance claims following the flooding in the Niki Bettendorf sports hall and Centre Atert now been settled, or is anything still outstanding? With regard to ordinary income, she would like to know what exactly the amount of 12,000 euros for rented accommodation for young people is. Accordingly, 50,000 euros has been allocated under ordinary expenditure from 1 February 2026 for the rental of a building to provide accommodation for young people. Beyond that, there are also a number of items under ordinary expenditure that she has questions or comments about. Attendance fees for the commissions have been set somewhat higher. Councillor Schares assumes that this is to compensate for those commissions that did not meet often. A new item under expenditure is archive management. How exactly will this work in practice if an external company handles it, and where is the archive located? She considers it important that archiving is carried out properly and professionally. Replacing the wall covering in the staircase of the town hall will cost 110,000 euros; what exactly is being done?

Councillor Schares asks where things stand with the implementation of the participatory budget, specifically the three projects. She hopes that the citizens of Bertrange will once again benefit from the new call for proposals and submit their ideas. The phase in which voting will then take place is also important. 400,000 euros has been earmarked for studies and expert opinions. She has a number of questions about this, first of all concerning the new projects. A master plan relating to school infrastructure is envisaged. This is certainly very important. Bertrange will continue to grow, and school infrastructure as well as other infrastructure should be thought through conceptually. Above all, it is still not known what the further implications of the Alpha project will be. What is planned and how long is this study expected to take, and when can results be

expected? What exactly does the financial analyses say? How should the “Vélo Mobycon” concept for Bertrange be envisaged? Does it also include a concept for bicycle and scooter stands to which these vehicles could be secured? She also has some further questions about studies and projects that have already been ongoing for some time. Consultancy support for the SEA has been underway since 2023. Is it bearing fruit and delivering the desired result? Where are they at with the “safer way to school”, pedestrian guidance system and emergency plan projects? What is the status of Sponge City? What has been implemented in the individual projects and what results are available? The Law of 7 January 2022 on accessibility for all applies to buildings and places open to the public, roads and pavements, as well as apartment buildings. The College of Mayor and Aldermen has now commissioned an analysis for around 80,000 euros to review the town hall, Centre Atert, the ArcA and Schauwenburg. Why only these four buildings to begin with? Are new buildings such as the Niki Bettendorf sports hall, the Duerfhaus, Centre Bureck and the new shops already compliant, since they have only recently been built? Furthermore, 25,000 euros has been earmarked for public spaces, but only the cemetery is listed there. What about the other public spaces, such as bus stops or playgrounds? What about apartment buildings such as the “Beim Schlass” building, the building with the pharmacy or the paediatrician’s building?

Councillor Schares states that she would also like to ask further questions on various matters. For example, staffing at the youth centre is to increase from 3 FTEs to 3.75 FTEs for 2026. Has there been such a large increase in the number of young people that staffing needs to be increased? As regards the Tiny Forest project, she notes that the first urban forest was created this year. 35,000 euros was budgeted for this. Is this merely the budgeted amount for one project, or did it mean that one or perhaps several such small projects are planned in future, since the same amount has been budgeted for next year? The concept of the flower competition has also changed. How many houses previously received a prize when members of the Environment Committee themselves carried out the tours to take photographs? How many houses have now received a prize since citizens have been asked to submit their photos themselves?

Does everyone receive a prize if they send photos by email, or do these have to be uploaded somewhere? A sum of 12,000 euros has been allocated for fifteen new gravestones in the cemetery. What is the idea behind this? Families generally take care of the gravestones themselves. With regard to the cemetery budget, care should also be taken to incorporate sufficient greenery, with more hedges and trees around it. The old music hall at Centre Atert is being renovated for around 380,000 euros. What will be done with this hall and for what purposes will it be used in future?

Councillor Schares also has a number of comments regarding municipal events. One of the public festivals being planned is “Summer am Park”. What can they envisage for this? The budget for Family Day is being increased from 45,000 euros last year to 80,000 euros this year. That is substantial. The budget for the “Absolut Bartreng” festival is around 600,000 euros. That is roughly the same amount received through all “Pacte logement” projects. She is pleased that the “Surf in Town” event has been discontinued. The budget for it was enormous. Given the immense budget for the winter market, they could perhaps invest a little in making the white tarpaulins concealing the chalet at the rear more attractive. They could place a few small fir trees in front of them or have suitable tarpaulins made. As regards the funfair, she would like to know what would need to be done to bring back dodgems, shooting galleries and a lunapark to the village? Would this require a bigger budget, or would they have to pay the fairground operators to come? This year, there was only one programme for small children. The slightly older children and teenagers had not really got their money’s worth at this year’s funfair. Yet the budget was the same as in all previous years. She noted that she had asked at this point, and repeatedly in Municipal Council meetings, for the accounts for the various festivals and events. These have now been presented recently.

Councillor Schares would like to briefly mention the municipality’s Children’s Council. She considers it a wonderful initiative, as it gives children the opportunity to take part in decision-making processes and to learn the basic principles of democracy. She would like to take this opportunity to thank the teaching staff and the SEA staff who support this project. At a Municipal Council meeting this year, the 2024/2025 school year report was presented under the item “Information and correspondence”. They have a relatively high budget for “frais de restauration et de réception”, but only 2,500 euros for “équipements divers”. Is this sufficient to implement the various measures set out in that report, or are the appropriations for improving the municipal infrastructure included under another budget line? Have the requests been taken into account: a mirror by

the bicycle cellar to improve safety, new nets and better lighting at the multi-sports ground, and the box-up project providing storage facilities for sports equipment? She then turns to another of her favourite topics: school playgrounds. The College of Mayor and Aldermen responded to a call for projects entitled “More nature in the village”. The fact that the project was selected and that the municipality has therefore been awarded 500,000 euros is, of course, great. This makes up a considerable proportion of a project costing around 800,000 euros. Who has drawn up this project? Were the Children’s Council, the pupils from the cycles concerned or the teaching staff also asked for their opinion? What is the situation with the other schoolyards? Has anything concrete been planned for the coming year to defuse conflicts in confined spaces? Or are new shaded areas planned?

Councillor Schares states that these are the items she identified in the budget. However, there are a number of things she feels are missing. At the Municipal Council meeting of 26 September 2025, the second declaration by the College of Mayor and Aldermen for this legislative period was presented. For the second time, the College of Mayor and Aldermen merely made a statement, and it was not considered desirable for the opposition to take the floor in response. Seventeen pages to set out clear priorities and announce significant projects. What counts as significant is, of course, open to interpretation. She wishes to pick up on some points from the statement by the College of Mayor and Aldermen. There is mention of larger storage facilities for associations. Where would these be located and from when could associations expect them? It also refers to administrative support for associations. What exactly does this mean? Volunteering is being promoted and recognised. Here too, she wonders how this would be implemented. Padel courts, a pump track and a bouldering wall were also mentioned. Where and when are these to be created? Not many budget debates remain. If all this really matters and is still to be implemented in this legislative period, there should already be a concept in place for these and other ideas. She also wishes to address a further point relating to sport, exercise and prevention – in other words, everything connected with a healthy lifestyle. What is needed for this? The right attitude, the courage to tackle it, and networking across many areas. A sports coordinator, partly subsidised by the Ministry of Sport, and the right infrastructure would be helpful. It is about promoting sport and exercise – from the youngest members of society to the oldest. Combined with the right diet at school, in the SEA and at home, this is a form of prevention that could help avoid many health problems, ease the burden on the healthcare system and benefit everyone. It is not enough simply to have a sports coordinator in the SEA and for the municipality and the committees to coordinate many things. It goes much further than that. It requires a person devoted exclusively to this. It requires the right information and awareness-raising campaign. To be able to offer sufficient sport and exercise, both through clubs and in the form of courses – from children’s gymnastics to courses for adults and older people – the right infrastructure is needed.

This makes an additional sports hall an absolute necessity. A simple, functional hall, so that there is no need to pay rent in neighbouring municipalities and parents do not have to organise transport to take their children to Mamer or “Geesseknäppchen”. Without good staff, all the work required for these projects would not be manageable, of course. She is pleased to see a slight increase in personnel. As the population grows, so too does the workload and the demands. Even though staffing levels have been increased, there is still room for improvement. Even if the wage bill represents a major expense, care has to be taken not to overwork the staff. Hardly a Municipal Council meeting goes by without someone new being hired again, either because someone has resigned or because the municipality needs to expand. Personnel management is a major challenge. Recently, the press has reported on many municipalities facing considerable unrest. SYVICOL now offers training in personnel management. Are these offers also being used in Bertrange? She is pleased that the website lists everyone by name and shows which department they work in, so that citizens know who they are dealing with if they need to get in touch. She wishes to stress once again that community life could not function without all the staff. She therefore expresses her sincere thanks to everyone for their work and commitment.

Mayor De Smet thanks Councillor Schares for her remarks. He replies that no stream has been announced for the budget meeting. The technical conditions are not yet in place. The budget document will be available on the municipal website once it has been approved by the competent minister. As regards the committees, it has not merely been a summary, but also an outlook on what is planned in future. The only meaningful and factually accurate comparison is one based on full, closed financial years. Only in this way can trends, such as dwindling reserves, be assessed reliably without conflating different starting conditions. Explanations regarding the livestream and the internal regulation have been given. At no point was there any intention to

restrict the opposition in its role or in its statements. Rather, the aim was to keep interventions to an objectively appropriate level in the interests of structured and efficient communication. At the same time, the municipal magazine is intended to serve increasingly as a platform for village life and to be filled with lively, municipality-focused content. As regards extraordinary expenditure, Councillor Schares mentioned the reception area at the municipal offices, but this is not currently a priority, as the costs should not be underestimated. That could nevertheless change again in the near future should suitable options become available. The themed trails in the forest have been revised together with the company Erlebnisplan and the municipal environment department. The "Beiepad" around the Beiestack building has been developed in cooperation with Erlebnisplan and SICONA. The camera inspection of the sewer system consists of two aspects: the rehabilitation and the actual inspection. Initial measures have already been taken. Even if this work is not directly visible, it is still important. As regards the flood warning system, the best way to install the cameras has recently been determined. In doing so, particular consideration was given to optimal positioning and a reliable power supply in order to ensure that the system will function dependably over the long term. Final implementation is planned for 2026. Planning permission has been granted for the housing project in Cité am Wenkel. It now has to be put out to tender and receive prior approval from the ministry. The inclusive playground is having to be closed more often because of the wooden seesaw being broken, sometimes deliberately. This is to be replaced with another material to ensure it can no longer be damaged so easily. As regards cycle paths, the priority in 2026 is the connection to Dippach. The National Roads Administration plays an important role here. Even if it might appear from the outside that the "A Schwalls" project is stagnating, it is in fact making progress. However, because many other actors are involved, it is taking time. Councillor Schares had also mentioned the work at Centre Atert. Here, the swimming pool water treatment plant will be refurbished and the air-conditioning renewed. As regards the final insurance settlements relating to flood damage, matters are in the final phase and therefore close to completion. The youth accommodation referred to is on Route de Longwy, where a house will be rented for this purpose. It was intended for young people starting work and for students. The municipal archives are being managed by an external company and consist of around 2,000 files per municipal service. An inventory has been carried out in order to decide what can be destroyed and what should continue to be archived. The wall covering in the staircase of the town hall is to be redesigned.

As regards the participatory budget, the defibrillators have already been installed and the table-tennis table will also be installed shortly. With regard to optimising the Shared Space, the municipality is still awaiting the evaluation of various measurements before it can commission any further work that may be necessary. The master plan for schools covers everything: the school buildings, the music school and the SEA. It is not enough simply to find a suitable plot of land and then build a new school for 500 children. One has to consider how the municipality will grow over the coming years. What developments will have to be undertaken in the short, medium or long term? The Helfent triangle also plays a major role in this regard. The master plan serves as a guideline. In addition, the financial implications must also be kept in mind. Velomobicon is a Dutch company that assesses cycle paths with a view to optimising them. The consultancy support for the SEA is a positive and highly beneficial project. The SEA is growing continuously and requires a clear structure. The "Séchere Schoulwee" will be presented to parents and the pedestrian guidance system will also be installed next year. As regards Sponge City, the analyses are underway, but no presentation has yet been received. The law on accessibility is important, and failure to implement it is also subject to criminal penalties. They have until 2032 to implement these measures. A step-by-step approach is being taken, which is why the work began with the four buildings used by the greatest number of people. Other buildings will follow. As regards the youth centre, there are no additional staff working there; the ministry subsidy had simply been higher. In addition, the facility continues to enjoy very strong demand. The unused graves in the old part of the cemetery are being made usable again. The old music hall is of a size not available elsewhere, which means it can be used for a range of purposes and also offers some storage space. This hall therefore offers a mix for everyone. As regards municipal events, these are always a matter of opinion. Plans include screenings of the Football World Cup, an open-air summer cinema and an attraction for children. They are also supporting the Absolut Bartreng festival. The white partitions at the "Wantermaat" are the same as those used at all events. The suggestion will be taken on board. As regards the fair, unlike other municipalities, the municipality does not pay the fairground operators, but this suggestion will be taken on board here as well. The Children's Council does important work. The developed projects are financed via the relevant municipal budget item. The Beim Schlass schoolyard is to be examined closely by the children. Councillor Schares has referred to storage facilities for associations,

but he wonders which of them actually need larger storage spaces? In recent years, the municipality has provided numerous associations with suitable premises for their activities and for the storage of materials. The sports coordinator does not have to be recruited externally, but could also be appointed internally. The demand for a third sports hall is not new, but no one has yet found a solution as to where it should be built. Here too, everything has to be in harmony with the other projects. The school master plan does not identify a need for a third hall; they are already well covered with regard to school sports. If more staff are taken on, they would also need to be properly supported and supervised. Recruitment will continue, but always with due regard to ensuring that existing staff are not overburdened by additional appointments and the associated induction period.

Alderman Lang notes that context is important and that they are following the ministry's circular. The final account balance is important in order to analyse the reserves. It is clear that more staff also means higher expenditure.

Councillor Smit-Thijs believes it is a pity that the inclusive playground is often broken. It was designed in cooperation with children. With regard to the accessibility legislation, she would like to point out that implementation is not required until 2032. She also wishes to point out that a great deal has already been implemented in the construction of the new SEA. The consultancy support aimed at improving the structure of the SEA has been a positive experience for both the College of Mayor and Aldermen and the SEA. The Beim Schlass schoolyard was put into use in 2017 and all requirements have been complied with. It is normal for children to occasionally get in each other's way in the morning. A number of changes have already been made and wishes have been taken into account. A small school garden has also been created there. In addition, break times could be staggered, so that some of the pupils can use the yard of the new SEA. As regards the wildflower meadows with native plants, these require more maintenance and, above all, several years before the plants and flowers become properly established. Such a project could therefore not be planned for just one year.

Councillor Glober states that the response to the new flower competition has been extremely positive, with around 40 entries received. When difficulties arose, solutions were sought together with residents, and older members of the community were supported. The aim should be to raise awareness, not to police. Nature does not simply mean beautiful flowers; it has to be understood holistically.

Alderman Miller adds that, in the previous competition, around 60 winners were recognised, but the whole thing was rather passive. There are now around 30 to 40 participants who submit their own photos and are therefore more actively involved. With regard to illegal parking in the Shared Space, he would like to point out that it is difficult to take any action there, as no signs may be put up. Nevertheless, enforcement action is taken wherever possible.

Mayor De Smet appeals to everyone's common sense with regard to the parking situation in the Shared Space.

Councillor Moro adds that citizens can now upload photos themselves and that there is no longer any need to limit the competition to front gardens. Gardens and balconies at the rear of properties can now also be entered in the competition.

Mayor De Smet gives the floor to Councillor Weirich.

Councillor Weirich thanks Councillor Schares for the wide range of questions. Without questions, there are no answers. He himself would like to analyse this budget first and foremost from the perspective of *Vivre ensemble*.

By this, he does not mean the committee of the same name, but rather the fact that the term *Vivre ensemble* ultimately sums up what a municipality is all about. On this point, he fully agrees with certain fundamental statements made by the majority in the course of the various interventions. The budget should create the foundation for being able to live well in the municipality. This implies the goal of enabling both the individual and, of course, the wider community of citizens to enjoy a good quality of life in Bertrange. It requires the material conditions, social cohesion, inclusion, economic and environmental factors, a sense of the spiritual,

but also projects in the area of leisure, as well as everything that is geared, in the broadest sense, towards well-being or, as Mayor De Smet put it, towards “subjective well-being”.

Councillor Weirich begins with the topic of education, which is an important point from this perspective. In the RTL programme on 19 November 2025, Minister Meisch answered questions on dual-track literacy teaching and emphasised at least twice that more space is needed in primary schools, and that more rooms will also be needed for the *Précoce* in the future. Mayor De Smet had previously spoken of a study analysing the school infrastructure, as well as of a master plan. This would make longer-term planning possible. In the short term, according to the Mayor’s remarks when preparing this meeting, the municipality would not really face any problems with regard to available space. The explanation given at the time was plausible. However, on Tuesday, his party had been informed that a class was being accommodated in the teachers’ room. Is this a rumour or does it correspond to the truth? If it is true, what is the reason for it? Irrespective of that, and as already mentioned, the municipality will be able to make use of the “Bei der Péitruess” facilities in the near future. There are eight rooms there which will be renovated and then be available. 230,000 euros has been budgeted for this. They are therefore trying to put themselves in a good position. He has several questions on this. What exactly is planned in this infrastructure? Will they be ordinary classrooms or specialist rooms, and for which cycle are they intended? What is the schedule for the renovation? Are there plans to move the *Art de la Parole* courses there as well? Or will these perhaps move into the old music hall, which is to be opened up for other activities in the future? As regards school more generally, he wishes to briefly address the educational projects. He has received very positive feedback from the teaching staff, particularly on the garden project for the children and the singing project in cooperation with the UGDA. In addition, something else was brought to his attention, to which he listened with great interest: It would be good if there were also an educational project in the field of art. In short, he has observed that there is demand for more systematic promotion of other artistic disciplines alongside music and singing. Art is a very diverse subject, which would make it possible to offer a great deal of variety in such an educational project. This corresponds exactly to the aim of giving art greater importance. Art would not have to be understood solely as painting. What about, for example, an educational project in the field of film? He also fondly recalls the *Tiny Books* project, which was carried out with great success a few years ago together with several classes and their teachers. Under ordinary income, a reimbursement of 17,500 euros for educational projects is provided for in favour of the municipality. Unfortunately, he has not been able to determine how much the singing project costs the municipality overall.

Councillor Weirich states that this provides a transition to culture, another important area, both for life itself and for living together. He generally welcomes the importance attached to culture in the municipality, which is also reflected in the budget. He wishes to focus on the ArcA in particular. The *Cachets d’artistes* budget item is the first thing that stands out. Here, 24,000 euros was budgeted in 2020, rising to 40,000 euros in the revised 2022 budget, while in 2024 the amount stood at 88,322.83 euros. 110,000 euros was budgeted for 2025, while an amount of 192,000 euros has been earmarked for next year. The amount has virtually doubled within two years. One could also say that, for artists’ fees alone, the culture service would have more than eight times as much funding next year as in 2020. That makes a difference and can be worked with. With this investment, a qualitative leap is being sought, and possibly also a quantitative expansion of the programme. Should the latter be the case, he would allow himself two remarks. The ArcA should continue to remain sufficiently available for our cultural associations and for initiatives arising from within the local community. Existing strengths should not be lost because of lack of space or overbooking. One example from recent years is the international festival BOOK ON. The first edition took place here in Bertrange. Afterwards, the festival was no longer given priority and moved, via Strassen, ultimately to Grund and Neumünster, with great success. Unfortunately, the potential of this festival for Bertrange was probably misjudged. The draft budget for the ArcA also shows that certain expenditure has risen from around 18,900 euros in 2024 to 95,200 euros, an increase of more than 500%, and almost three times more than in 2025. This increase presumably follows the logic of higher artists’ fees. Nevertheless, a number of questions arise. Which specific events or objectives justify this massive increase? His party is somewhat surprised that so much reliance is being placed on catalogues and printed materials. After all, digitalisation has been strongly promoted in recent years. Does this mark a change of direction, or does it show that paper still cannot be dispensed with? Is the *Enjoy-Agenda* not being used by enough people? Expenditure on the *Enjoy* campaign will in any case remain stable at 40,000 euros in 2026. On this basis, he would like to make two suggestions. It is about time they offered an annual subscription for the ArcA, such as three or four events at a discounted price. This would support momentum and help build

audience loyalty. He proposes that an earlier idea now be put into practice: cooperation with another cultural centre, namely the *Cube* in Marnach. A willingness to cooperate had already been signalled in the past. Programmes could be exchanged, joint work undertaken and the ArcA's visibility enhanced in this way, with potential financial benefits for both venues. He is also very pleased that Bayota and the promotion of young talents will be continued, that the significance of this festival was recognised in the Municipal Council and that the relevant budget item will be doubled compared with 2024. He is curious to see what next year will bring. He also requests explanations for two budget items. What exactly is meant by the item "Fees for external advice and expert opinions"? Is the involvement of experts part of the normal, prescribed *mise en conformité* procedure after alterations have been made to the hall, or does it relate to defects? Do they already know what might be coming here?

Councillor Weirich states that the next point concerns the topic of security, with expenditure of almost half a million euros for our municipal agents and the CGDIS. People repeatedly report incidents that they find very unpleasant and that cause them concern. Added to this are incidents that find their way into the press. Unfortunately, both contribute to a general sense of insecurity that is not conducive to good community life. He wonders whether, as a municipality, additional efforts could be made here, with the help of our municipal agents, even if not everything lies within the municipality's own remit and not every dark corner can be illuminated. His main concern here is civil protection, which is currently the subject of intensive discussion at national level. The aim is to make municipalities more resilient within the framework of a national strategy and to draw up local resilience plans. What is the College of Mayor and Aldermen's position on a local resilience plan? How far have the plans for this progressed in Bertrange? Or are measures already included in the budget without explicitly using the term resilience? He can provide one answer to this himself, namely in the area of flooding. In recent years, there has been a lot of investment in retention basins and in the sewer system, including on Rue de la Pétrusse, Rue de Mamer and the surrounding areas. Today, the renewal of Rue Rilsper was also announced; this is logical, as it connects directly to Rue de la Pétrusse. These are major projects that have the full support of his party. One particularly important project is the Hiermesweiher with its dam for controlling large volumes of water in heavy rainfall. The opposition also supports this project and hopes that agreement can be reached with all owners so that it can be implemented as quickly as possible. However, other critical areas should not be forgotten, such as Cité am Bruch, where water also enters cellars and garages even without once-in-a-century rainfall. What do experts say about this situation? What possibilities are there to improve the sewer system there? Could the municipality grant a subsidy if residents retrofit backflow valves? However, the local resilience plan also goes beyond this. Other risks – flooding, pandemics, nuclear accidents – show how important preparedness and vigilance are. The 2026 budget has been described as a "budget of peace". Hopefully it will remain so. Yet they need to learn once again to be vigilant and prepared.

Councillor Weirich explains that Bertrange sets itself high standards. It was recently stated in the *Luxemburger Wort* that Bertrange promises its future residents "a sustainable future for the entire living environment, safeguarded by the municipality". This ambition is clear, and it is a shared responsibility to live up to it. They no longer live in a patriarchal system in which those at the top determine what a good life means. That is why, alongside the committees, there are also information and discussion meetings with citizens. He is pleased that a structure is to be created in which older residents can play a more active role. The opposition is also seeking dialogue. The CSV's last citizens' meeting took place in Helfent and the results were sent to the municipal councillors in a memorandum. It clearly shows what matters to people and what the pressing issues are. Not everything can be covered here, so he will confine himself to a few observations. The budget repeatedly contains smaller budget items that make it possible for them to respond to concerns. What matters is to take needs seriously and, where possible, to act quickly. The traffic-calming measures in Cité am Wenkel, for example, could have been implemented earlier. The municipality can also play a mediating role, such as with the National Roads Administration or in the event of problems in facilities for older people. At the same time, the citizens also have to take responsibility. Cleanliness is only one example. Four bins are of no use if they are not used. In other places, however, additional litter bins would make sense. Against this background, he also sees the 150,000 euros for printing costs as an opportunity to repeat important information on a regular basis. Under the heading "Haalt Bartreng propper!", a new campaign could be launched. There is also a need for information about the BERTI on-demand bus, a highly appreciated service. Requests include a Sunday service and a link to Klinik Eich, which belongs to the CHL. Alongside the positive developments, however, there has

also been some controversy surrounding a decision on a recreational course. Personnel decisions call for sensitivity. Mistakes can happen, and what matters is learning from them.

Councillor Weirich notes that the municipality has repeatedly made building land available and is investing increasingly in affordable and social housing. Many projects are in preparation and he hopes they will now move forward quickly. Do they know how many dwellings in Bertrange are standing empty? There is thought to be an alarming number of them. Mouvement écologique puts it at 5–15% nationwide. It is not always necessary to build anew; the existing building stock could also be used. In this way, social and ecological aspects are combined. The tenancy law allows the Municipal Council to require owners of vacant dwellings to report them. He is not in favour of compulsion, but it would make sense to issue another call for voluntary reporting, launch an information campaign and provide information on social leasing.

Councillor Weirich states that his party is once again putting forward the Centre for Ecology and Solidarity as a constructive proposal. It could encourage citizens to take responsibility in relation to the Climate Pact and Nature Pact by offering information, advice, courses, exhibitions, a second-hand shop, a swap exchange and a repair café. The aim is to counter the throwaway society and promote the circular economy. In the social sphere, this could incorporate a social shop, food sharing, integration and reintegration services, meeting spaces for different groups or simply a café for informal gatherings.

Councillor Weirich goes on to explain that the remit of *Vivre ensemble* extends beyond the municipality's boundaries. We live in a globalised world. Some important projects should be mentioned in this context, such as town twinning with a budget of 130,000 euros, annual aid of 25,000 euros for disaster areas, and the international social project *What Water* in Cameroon. To conclude, Councillor Weirich says he would like to endorse Mayor De Smet's call to work together respectfully. As the opposition, they see it as their job to think critically and challenge the majority, very much in the spirit of Goethe's Faust, where contradiction spurs people on to develop further.

Mayor De Smet thanks Councillor Weirich for his remarks. Subjective well-being is something that matters to everyone. With regard to the Alpha project, a meeting was held with the school management, which currently does not see any problem in the municipality. Parents will be spoken to first before decisions are taken. This project is being completely torn apart and misrepresented at national level by various parties. In the short term, the rooms of the SEA "Bei der Péitruess" will be renovated so that classes can be accommodated there again at a later point in time. The question as to why some classes are accommodated in the teachers' room at the "Beim Schlass" school is easy to answer. Some of the premises are currently being fitted out for the school doctor, which is why they have been benefiting from this space. There is no concrete timetable for the renovations. However, completion is planned by the next school year at the latest. The educational project for language arts will not have exclusive use of the hall, as it is to remain accessible. Councillor Weirich raises the idea of initiating a similar educational project for art. On this point, discussions have been held, although a teaching team willing to run such a project would also have to be found. In the area of culture, the budget has been increased substantially. In the past, they had to approach artists; now it is the other way round. However, the associations still have priority when it comes to dates. Alternatives have been proposed to the organisers of the "Book on" festival, but they were not suitable. As regards marketing costs, the municipality is also taking inspiration from other venues and planning to make the ArcA programme available in other venues as well. This is not a change of direction, but rather part of a process towards becoming a cultural venue. The idea of an annual subscription will be taken on board. Cooperation with other cultural venues is already underway, including on co-productions. Bayota is close to people's hearts, and this festival has also changed over the years. The ArcA is gradually being transformed into a modern cultural venue.

With regard to safety in the municipality, Mayor De Smet states that burglaries are decreasing, but "trying door handles" is on the rise. Police patrols are also now driving through the municipality more frequently. They cannot alleviate people's sense of insecurity completely. The municipal agents are also working on this. The document on civil protection was provided by the ministry and is similar to the municipality's own draft. As regards the Hiermesweiher, there are still a number of points to clarify before this project is ready to be announced. Cité am Bruch is also affected by flooding, and those citizens can likewise contact the municipality in the context of the property protection study. The municipality is not always solely responsible. Citizens also

have to bear responsibility. The CSV memorandum concerning the Helfent triangle is partly contradictory, as everyone wants something different. Where wishes are feasible and serve the general interest, they are implemented promptly. As regards the municipality's printed materials, this budget item has already been increased, including with a view to the new magazine. This will be more expensive than the previous municipal newsletter. The municipal services will also have their place in it. With the on-demand bus, it is the same discussion every year. The time needed to reach Kirchberg or Eich would no longer be available for all the other users. Whether the on-demand bus should also run on Sundays depends solely on whether this service would actually be used. Vacant dwellings are a difficult topic. It is not really possible to identify them, and there is no desire to force anyone to make their dwelling available for rent. A centre for solidarity and ecology is a project of the CSV, not the majority. A great many stakeholders are involved here, which makes it difficult to create anything additional in this area. Furthermore, there are already a number of existing initiatives, such as the repair café and the second-hand shop at the recycling centre in Kehlen. As regards town twinning and the partnerships, this is something close to everyone's heart. A project has now also been received from Cape Verde and will be financially supported as well.

Councillor Philippe notes that the educational project for 360 minutes per week costs around 41,500 euros per year. As regards the technical equipment for the ArcA, this is a prerequisite for officially becoming a theatre venue, as a number of criteria have to be met. Four co-productions are also planned for 2026. In addition, the artists' levy has now become more expensive because they are a member of the theatre federation. A larger project is also planned for 2027, for which 50,000 euros will already be needed in 2026.

Alderman Lang states that, since 23 August 2023, there has been a paradigm shift from integration to living together. The municipality will continue to work on coexistence in the municipality, and will do so even more broadly than before.

Councillor Smit-Thijs states that there are currently eight classes housed in the Beiestack school building; the teachers' room has been refurbished, as has the craft room. The "Bei der Péitruess" building is being prepared, but it will probably not yet be needed next year. They want to make the best possible use of the available space.

Mayor De Smet adds that it is clearly beneficial to be able to work in small classes, especially for children with difficulties. Inclusive teaching also means having enough space for CTSA classes, meaning classes for autistic pupils.

Mayor De Smet gives the floor to Councillor Rauchs.

Councillor Rauchs states that the budget document shows that the country – and thus the municipality too – is still doing well. The healthy finances are reassuring. Sometimes a good deal of patience is needed before an idea can actually be implemented. There are often good reasons for this, such as with the housing construction project carried out in collaboration with the Fonds du Logement on Rue de Dippach. The municipality's housing construction project on Rue de Mamer no longer appears in the budget, so he assumes it is being postponed. The same applies to Cité am Wenkel and to the municipal workshops. Shortly before the 2023 municipal elections, the "A Schwalls" project was presented to the citizens, which led to certain expectations and desires. The citizens are impatient and asking questions because no progress can be seen. What is the status of this project? Could another information meeting be convened to update the citizens on the latest developments? As regards the sports coordinator, it is essential to engage in dialogue; the same goes for a third sports hall. Could the opposition not be involved more closely, including in the interest of greater transparency for the citizens? What is the situation regarding the public scribe? Does the municipality still offer this service or is there no demand for it? In addition, 200,000 euros has been earmarked for the forest in the budget. However, this is a different amount than before. What exactly is this about? Sponge City is also a great initiative; are there any interim results yet? As regards street lighting, he wishes to note that some streets are not illuminated brightly enough. The charity event raised 6,000 euros in donations, but staging it cost 30,000 euros. Can associations still have their flyers distributed through the municipality, and will this service be discontinued when the new magazine is published?

Mayor De Smet notes that Councillor Rauchs mentioned the ministry's circular. At present, they can count themselves fortunate, but caution is still advisable. As regards the housing construction project on Rue de Dippach, being carried out jointly with the Fonds de Logement, the time frame is normal. Unfortunately, nothing can be done about that. For the housing construction project on Rue de Mamer, the timing is being aligned with the development of the Brill PAP. Since implementation of the Brill PAP currently has priority, both projects cannot be carried out in parallel. The housing project in Cité am Wenkel is to be put out to tender next year, after which construction is scheduled to begin. The construction of the new municipal workshops is not off the table either; however, the municipality wishes to consider an overall concept and, above all, keep the finances in mind. The "A Schwalls" project is continuing, but this is a lengthy, technical and difficult process. The requirements of the ministry also have to be met. The project has therefore been partially revised again. Moreover, many matters have to be clarified in advance. It should be possible for the agreement concerning the sports coordinator to be signed by the ministry in the near future. As regards the training hall for sports clubs, he wishes to point out that around 25 million euros has been invested in sports infrastructure in recent years. No suitable plot has yet been found, and this new hall also has to fit into the overall concept. There has been little demand for a public scribe, and this service is now provided by ASTI. The 200,000 euros relating to the forest was a joint project with the municipality of Strassen's college of mayor and aldermen. It is a request from the forester to purchase new machinery and expand the hall. Work on the Sponge City project is continuing; satellite images have been requested, but no interim update has yet been received. As regards street lighting, it is difficult to reach a consensus. In Bourmicht, all the street lights are still switched off at night. As regards the charity event, greater attendance was expected. The associations were informed by email that the municipality allows and appropriately supports the distribution of flyers for their activities.

Councillor Philippe confirms that every association has been informed of this. The local music association makes regular use of this service.

Councillor Smit-Thijs adds that the municipality already has two sports halls with three playing fields and two swimming pools. That is more than many other municipalities can boast.

Mayor De Smet gives the floor to Councillor Schuster.

Councillor Schuster thanks Mayor De Smet for giving her the floor. She would like to start by expressing a very big thank you to everyone involved in preparing this budget, especially Sophie Humbert and Alain Kariger. A big thank you also goes to Jessica Biver and Georges Franck. She also thanks all municipal staff and the members of all committees who devoted themselves to serving the municipality during 2025. The Luxembourg market was characterised by moderate economic growth in 2025. According to STATEC, real GDP is expected to grow by around 1 to 1.2%. Inflation is expected to be between 2.2 and 2.5%. Overall, it can be said that Luxembourg is recording stable, albeit subdued, growth despite a challenging European environment, supported by targeted policy measures and a gradual recovery in key sectors. Despite this slight growth, it is still important to plan the municipal budget with foresight and manage it responsibly as the central financial framework, while ensuring transparency towards all stakeholders. In 2026, the municipality will receive around 46 million euros in non-earmarked revenue, including property tax, business tax and the *Fonds de dotation globale*. This amount is higher than in the previous year. The ordinary 2025 budget closed with income of 74 million euros and expenditure of 60 million euros, producing a surplus of 14 million euros. This means that the operating and administrative budget is on a very solid footing. The draft budget for 2026 provides for revenue of 75 million euros and expenditure of 67 million euros, likewise leaving a surplus of 8 million euros. She would now like to address some important projects. Some have already been mentioned, while others have not. First, however, she wishes to once again briefly mention the beach volleyball courts in Helfent Park, a point that the LSAP has already been calling for in its programme for years. At last, the issues surrounding the sand have been resolved, meaning the clubs concerned can start using the facilities this year.

Councillor Schuster notes that, at the start of the 2025/26 school year, the SEA opened its doors to around 480 children. It is an extremely important project: barrier-free, with suitable infrastructure, numerous themed rooms, an attractive playground with a herb garden, slide, dining areas and much more. What is the general situation regarding accessibility in the municipality's other infrastructure? Is the municipality compliant with the legal requirements in this respect? Her party is fully behind this project. It had been necessary in order to

offer the children more space and enable staff to provide better care. She wishes to take the opportunity to pass on some very positive feedback. At the opening, some children had told her how surprised they were by the attractive and spacious premises. This assessment was also confirmed by several staff members. She hopes that both the children and the staff will be able to make optimum use of these premises, as is also the case in Bertrange's schools. The old SEA premises are to be renovated. What future use is envisaged for them?

Councillor Schuster also explains that the "A Schwalls" project is a mammoth project. Work continued on it in 2025 and adjustments were made to reduce the overall costs. Some solutions have been found, while others still need to be worked out. A project of this scale has to be planned very carefully. Firstly, so that the municipality is able to finance it, and secondly, to avoid major cost overruns. As regards the new municipal workshops, these will not be built until it has been clarified what will happen to the old building in the village centre. It has been said that a use in connection with the schools and the SEA is being examined. Is this correct? This centrally located building offers a wide range of possibilities, such as for an intergenerational space with a repair café, studios, workshops, exhibitions, cookery and painting classes, and much more. The courtyard also opens up many possibilities for outdoor projects. This could further promote *Vivre ensemble*. As regards municipal infrastructure, work is planned, including on the swimming pool filters, the air-conditioning and the timber façade.

Councillor Schuster states that her party expressly welcomes the fact that a great deal will be happening in the area of housing construction over the coming years. The municipality has acquired several apartments that are to be let as affordable housing and still need to be completed. Further projects are being planned or under construction. It is important for the municipality to regularly seek opportunities to acquire and sublet dwellings in order to support different households. Over the past two years, she has also called for annual housing inspections to be introduced, both to strengthen dialogue with tenants and to check the condition of the dwellings. She also welcomes the initiative to rent accommodation on Rue de Longwy for young job beginners. Exactly how many dwellings does the municipality currently have that are already being let as affordable housing? Are the apartments treated with greater care and respect as a result of the annual inspections?

Councillor Schuster states that 14 July 2021 was a very difficult day for many citizens because of the flooding. A large number of measures have already been implemented, which for many local residents meant years of diversions and disruption. Her party expressly welcomes the necessary work that has already been carried out. Other work is being planned, such as the dam on Rue des Champs, budgeted at 100,000 euros in 2025 and 750,000 euros in 2026, as well as sewer work on Rue de Mamer and the surrounding streets. The entire 80 km sewer system will also be inspected by camera for 1.2 million euros, in addition to a risk analysis for flash flooding in the amount of 260,000 euros. She very much hopes that a situation of this kind will not happen again. It is also positive that work is planned on Rue Rilspert. Nevertheless, she wishes to emphasise that responsibility does not lie solely with the municipality. Each individual is also responsible for protecting their property against flooding. In this context, she also asks about the status of the Sponge City project, which had already been included in the 2025 budget. Alongside the sewerage work, Rue de Mamer will be redesigned to calm traffic and promote soft mobility, with a total investment of 10.8 million euros. In addition, an underpass is planned at Rue Charles Schwall/Cité am Wenkel and an overpass between Rue du Chemin de Fer and Cité Eechels. These two projects will enable pedestrians and cyclists to cross the railway line safely. 150,000 euros has been earmarked for 2025 and 60,000 euros for 2026, within a total budget of 4.2 million euros. On the subject of road safety, she also wishes to address the safe route to school. For the LSAP, it is essential that children should be able to get to school and back home as safely as possible. She had already been told a year ago that a corresponding project was being developed together with children and parents. In her opinion, zebra crossings also form part of a safe route to school. Some places are dangerous, especially when it is dark, raining or foggy. Measures should be examined here, such as better lighting, raised crossings, warning systems, children's footprint markings, figures at strategic points, or similar. What is the current status of this project? She is very pleased that a sum has been earmarked for redesigning the playgrounds. Bertrange has 32 playgrounds with five different typologies. Some are currently closed, while others have to be checked for safety reasons. A comprehensive study analysed positive, negative and critical points and gave rise to a convincing overall concept. Not every playground has to be the same. Safety comes first, but age-appropriate play equipment, attractiveness, durable materials, shaded areas, spaces for parents and much more are also part of the equation. A new concept is also planned for Helfent Park. She had suggested that this should take

account not only of children, but also of older, still active people, especially because of the neighbouring housing for older people. After refurbishment, it will be important to ensure that the playgrounds are inspected, maintained and managed on a regular basis and are not neglected again.

Councillor Schuster states that, on Rue Schauwenburg, there is a fallow area behind the houses. A sum of 20,000 euros was included in the 2025 budget and 15,000 euros in the 2026 budget for a study on creating a climate garden there. A good initiative to make meaningful use of this area. She would also like to return to the square "Bei den Hunnen". Despite the underground car park beneath it, it would be highly desirable to enhance this heavily paved square in the village centre, especially now that four shops are due to open opposite. More greenery, plants and large planters to reduce noise and enliven the square would be conceivable. The existing fitness equipment is hardly used; perhaps it could be moved to Helfent Park or replaced with loungers. In addition, an inventory of neglected squares and streets in the various neighbourhoods would be useful so that these could be upgraded step by step. The footpath along Route de Longwy is a project that has been repeatedly called for. It represents an important link for the south-western neighbourhoods. 150,000 euros was earmarked for this in 2025 and 770,000 euros in 2026. In 2023, the opposition at the time had tabled a motion for Municipal Council meetings to be livestreamed. This is now being implemented. Audiovisual recordings of the meetings will be made available on the municipal website. She also welcomes the idea of replacing the municipal newsletter with a magazine that informs people about how the municipality functions, as well as about events and associations, of course with due regard for sustainability.

On the subject of nature and the environment, Councillor Schuster states that her party welcomes the regular monitoring of forests and the measures aimed at preserving biodiversity. Special thanks go to the forester and his team. The Tiny Forest planted in November using the Miyawaki method is a wonderful project. The solar park also contributes to biodiversity, as do the flower meadows, which are greatly appreciated by the public. All associations signed a sustainability charter in 2024. Great importance was attached to waste separation, but implementation is still lagging behind. Many associations are showing an interest and have already organised Green Events. Where exactly do things stand with this project, and why is the implementation taking so long? The first participatory budget, amounting to 100,000 euros, was a success. Three projects were implemented. A new participatory budget for 2025/2026 was launched, and it is hoped that further submissions will follow. As regards the Vel'OH bike rental service, she unfortunately has to say that they are often used improperly or damaged. What is the current situation, and could the public be made more aware of the issue? Have any additional cycle stands been installed at strategic locations in the meantime? What does the overall concept for improving cycle routes and safety look like? As regards the associations, she welcomes the new dishwashing trailer as well as the minibus, which can be booked from 2026 onwards and will be a great help. The sports halls are modern and well equipped. Nevertheless, there is a lack of space. In the long term, the question of a further sports complex will arise. It is important to address this issue at an early stage. The "Soirée du bénévolat" was a complete success and should be repeated. Voluntary commitment is invaluable to society. She thanks them for the accounts relating to the municipality's events. They were valuable events, but the budgets should continue to be critically reviewed. As regards the winter market, one of the questions was whether it should be expanded. In relation to the spring market, autumn market and funfair, she also wonders whether stallholders have to pay a stall fee. The ArcA programme is varied and high-quality. She welcomes the idea of positioning it more strongly as an open cultural venue. What exactly does this concept look like? The youth centre is an extremely important place for leisure, social contact and personal development. The Social Welfare Office and Youth & Work are also indispensable points of contact for citizens in difficult life situations. To conclude, she would like to turn briefly to the town twinning partnerships. Since this year, the municipality has maintained partnerships with three municipalities. These exchanges are very enriching. Thanks once again go to Jessica Biver for the excellent organisation.

Mayor De Smet replies that the backbone of the municipality's financial situation is taxes received from the State. In response to the question as to which municipal buildings are PRM-friendly, the Schauwenburg and the "Duerfhaus", for example, comply with PRM requirements thanks to the external lift. They will have four further buildings reviewed in 2026. The mammoth "A Schwalls" project is taking time, however much everyone would like to speed it up. Relocating the municipal workshops would free up valuable space in the village centre. They would like to gather ideas for this together with local residents. Some believe a school should be

built there, while others believe there are different priorities. In the courtyard, it would certainly be possible to hold a repair café in summer; this could be discussed with the Climate Pact Committee. Home visits are carried out annually in rented dwellings. After the floods of 2021, the residents of Rue de Dippach and Rue de la Pétrusse had not always been satisfied. However, a project has been set up here in record time to remedy the situation, and it is now close to completion. Rue Rilsperth will also be included. The camera inspection of the sewer system is also helpful. This project was presented to the Water Management Authority and has been retained by them as a pilot project. It is intended to become a directive for all municipalities. He therefore wishes to thank Christian Cloos, who is overseeing this project. The “De séchere Schoulwee” project and the pedestrian guidance system will be implemented next year. The redesign of the playgrounds and Helfent Park is already underway. There is a large open space on Rue Schauwenburg. It is to be transformed into a climate garden to enhance the neighbourhood. Sports classes such as yoga could also be offered there. The redesign of the square “Bei den Hunnen” is difficult, but they are working on solutions. As regards waste separation, he is slightly surprised, as separation options exist. The cycle route network is being reviewed by Mobicom. With regard to the third sports hall, he notes that not every municipality provides the same level of support as Bertrange. Municipal events cost money, but they also contribute to social cohesion. The College of Mayor and Aldermen monitors the costs. Exhibitors at the funfair and the markets do not pay a stall fee. In 2026, the municipality will celebrate 30 years of town twinning with Santa Maria Nuova, probably together with the two other partner municipalities as well.

Councillor Smit-Thijs adds that the tennis courts will not simply be refurbished – they will be completely new courts that can also be used for longer.

Mayor De Smet gives the floor to the party spokespersons.

Councillor Schuster thanks the speakers for the many details and explanations. She would welcome more opportunities for municipal councillors to gain insights behind the scenes, such as through visits to municipal services or facilities. Greater exchange between the majority and the opposition would help to answer questions from residents and associations better. The Children’s Council is a very good initiative; it is simply a pity that exchange with the Municipal Council remains limited over the course of the year. A Youth Council would be a sensible addition. The LSAP will continue to support all major and necessary projects, such as in the areas of flood protection, infrastructure, housing construction and playgrounds. At the same time, it is important to her party to secure suitable sites at an early stage, so they can plan ahead in an intelligent manner. The municipality has the financial means to act in the interests of the citizens and to continue improving quality of life. For the LSAP, what matters is that these resources are used responsibly. She will continue to contribute constructively in the Municipal Council and hopes that some of her proposals will be heard and implemented. She thanks everyone and wishes the whole staff, the Municipal Council, all citizens and their families good health, a happy Christmas and a good start to the new year.

Councillor Schares states that many important points have been addressed. She thanks everyone for the many explanations and answers. It is clear that the retirement home project is likely to be one that will cost a lot of money in the coming years. Nevertheless, care must be taken not to cut costs in the wrong places and not to save too much space merely to gain more rooms at the expense of quality of life. Even though this is an important project, care must be taken to ensure that other projects do not suffer or receive too little attention. Before that happens, the municipality should be prepared to take out a loan. A master plan for the infrastructure would make sense. Here too, it would be good to be informed in due course. Even though the CSV sits in the opposition, they nevertheless try to contribute their own ideas. They are not an opposition that opposes everything on principle. They support those projects that seem sensible and beneficial for the municipality’s development. However, the substance and priority of some projects do not always correspond to what the CSV can identify with, as some of its priorities are different. The party would welcome receiving a brief update from time to time on the status of various projects or studies, simply to know what is currently underway, as members of the opposition are also often asked about this externally. They continue to believe in democracy and transparency and in fair cooperation, and they will continue to pursue a constructive opposition policy in future. She thanks everyone for their attention and wishes the Municipal Council, the entire municipal staff and all Bertrange citizens a happy Christmas and a good and, above all, healthy start to the new year.

Councillor Globber notes that they can be proud to have prepared a forward-looking and sustainable budget for 2026. Environmental and climate protection are responsibilities shared by society as a whole, and in which the municipality is leading the way with scientifically founded measures, whether through the work with SICONA and the forester or the expansion of the cycling infrastructure. At the same time, citizens are actively encouraged to make their own contribution, such as through a 25% renovation bonus, grants for renewable energies, or recognition within the context of the “Natur Doheem” competition. Photovoltaics has meanwhile become standard in all municipal projects, and an energy cooperative is in preparation. Soft mobility is also being further improved with new overpasses and underpasses across the railway tracks. Last but not least, the municipality is investing specifically in plots of land and dwellings, each with a volume of around 1.5 million euros, in order to provide affordable housing for students, young professionals, and citizens on lower incomes. His sincere thanks go to everyone involved, and his party are looking ahead with great anticipation to the implementation of all these measures in 2026.

Councillor Colabianchi states that the municipality of Bertrange is in a healthy financial position. This has come through in all the comments and is an important factor for future projects and implementations, as there are certainly plenty of ideas. They will face major challenges in the future and, sooner or later, they will not be able to avoid taking out a loan – on that, the entire Municipal Council is agreed. Councillor Weirich states that the budget debate is intended to question projects and ask questions, and that this has indeed been done in today’s meeting. Councillor Schares claims that the statement by the College of Mayor and Aldermen was simply a merging of the election programmes of the two majority parties. Councillor Colabianchi, however, maintains that this is certainly not the case. They have met several times to decide what they want to implement and what would have to be left by the wayside. It has also been said by the opposition that projects need to be driven forward more quickly and that there is “stagnation”. This too does not correspond to the truth. Major projects require thorough preparatory work before moving on to the implementation phase. The municipality is not even halfway through the legislative period, meaning there is still ample time to implement projects. The analysis will only be carried out after six years – at the end of the legislative period – and not by the Municipal Council, but by residents at the next elections.

As Councillor Colabianchi notes, since this is not the first time that the DP has entered into a coalition with déi gréng, some have voiced the view that their first experience of working together was not a fruitful one. He has to reject these claims by the opposition, as major projects had been implemented during that very legislative period: the redesign of the village centre based on the shared-space principle, along with the renaturalisation of the Pétrusse, the creation of the pirate playground and a new car park, the opening of the “Bei der Péitruuss” school and the “Beim Schlass” school, the extension of the SEA “Beiestack” major investment in Sporting Bertrange’s infrastructure, a clubhouse for the “Amis de la Pétanque”, Bertrange becoming the first municipality to offer free electric bike sharing, the renovation of the water tower, the creation of the “Duerfgaart”, the construction of retention basins, the creation of a forest cemetery and costly work on the church – and Councillor Colabianchi could add even more to this list. To say that the work carried out at that time had borne no fruit is therefore a sheer misrepresentation of reality. Councillor Colabianchi adds that, nowadays, every party is concerned with Helfent Park. Without the DP’s commitment, it would not even exist. This issue was first mentioned in the election programme in 1995 and was met by the CSV with a weary smile. With regard to previous meetings and today’s lengthy budget debate, Councillor Colabianchi notes that people often refer to a fair, constructive and critical opposition policy. Unfortunately, there has been little sign of that recently, or perhaps he personally had a different interpretation of those values. In this context, he therefore wishes to express his respect for the new College of Mayor and Aldermen, and in particular for the young Mayor, whose start in office has been anything but easy. In this turbulent situation, Mayor De Smet has kept a cool head and not engaged in any smear campaign. At that time, images appeared showing fat, sad blue elephants and little green mice, accompanied by texts that may have been intended as satire, but unfortunately this art form was not the writer’s strong point. The DP had not appreciated this way of doing politics; they had not responded to it and would not do so. Instead, they will continue to focus on good and constructive cooperation between all parties and hope to return to the way things once were, particularly as regards the collegial cooperation that characterises Bertrange Municipal Council. Councillor Colabianchi hopes that this somewhat more reflective period will also bring greater calm again.

Mayor De Smet thanks the party spokespersons. At the end of the day, what matters is that every member of the Municipal Council devotes themselves to serving the citizens, whatever their party colours. They now move to the vote on the adjusted 2025 budget and the 2026 budget.

The adjusted 2025 budget is adopted by 7 votes in favour (DP), 2 abstentions (déi gréng) and 4 votes against (CSV, LSAP).

The 2026 budget is adopted by 9 votes in favour (DP, déi gréng) and 4 votes against (CSV, LSAP).

Mayor De Smet thanks all Municipal Councillors and wishes everyone happy holidays, good health and a happy new year 2026. He hopes that everyone will continue working together constructively to serve the local citizens.

End of the meeting: 2:45 p.m.