

Our parliamentary group spokesperson on the 2026 budget – Municipal Council 11.12.2025

At first glance, a budget document is primarily a document of numbers, but behind these figures lie projects, work, and responsibility. Everyone has their role to play: assigning the right figures to the right budget items, ensuring that everything balances out, and exercising oversight. Therefore, a big thank-you from our side for the preparation of this document. Without a budget, a municipality cannot function.

For all interested citizens: the 2025 budget document was available on the website; I believe that the same approach will be taken for the 2026 budget.

We have now heard a summary from several commissions.

However, our role as the opposition now consists in scrutinising this document, analysing it, asking questions, and not simply accepting everything as it is.

Marc has already mentioned many details. Revenues such as the *impôt commercial* and the *fonds de dotation globale des communes* naturally help us to support the budget.

You said that the budget is sound and stands on solid footing. However, if one looks at the figures of the last three years, our reserve (*réserve budgétaire*) shows a **downward trend**. At the end of 2024, we had a reserve of 14 million. At the end of 2025, a reserve of 7 million. And for the end of 2026, a reserve of one million is planned.

In previous years, we were also provided with graphics to illustrate various areas. I always found this to be very clear. Particularly with regard to the *masse salariale*, we currently have no concrete idea at all.

The normal operation of a municipality – with regard to water, sewerage, electricity, waste collection, heating, buildings, maintenance, and so on – represents an enormous cost factor that must be covered and borne. This is undisputed. In addition to everyday operations, however, there are many other points, and I would like to address some of them.

Basically, we had been informed that the streaming of the December budget meeting would be ready; however, this does not appear to be the case. A pity.

In addition to streaming, the **municipal bulletin** is the means by which one can find out what was discussed and decided in the municipal council meetings. Due to the streaming, the *règlement d'ordre intérieur* had to be adapted. At the same time, you also wanted to publish only the *résumé de l'objet* and the decision and to completely omit the various statements, with the argument that the stream would now be available. For us, this is not an argument, as by no means everyone has the possibility to access the stream. Only facts would be presented, and citizens would no longer be able to participate in the arguments that lead to a decision. We are pleased that you listened to our arguments and continue to agree to publish the various statements.

The municipal bulletin is to be given a different form. I welcome this. In my view, it should be informative and clearly structured, reflect village life, but also keep people up to date on various projects and studies – not with long texts, but with comprehensible images and graphics. For me, village life does not only mean events organised by the municipality, but also the associations. We do not need the flyer for an event to be three times as large, over three pages and in three languages;

other solutions can be found here so that a 200-page magazine does not have to be printed every time.

To begin with, I would like to address some points relating to the **dépenses extraordinaires**:

What has become of the study on the redesign of the *accueil-service état civil*? What were the results? Is nothing further being initiated here? After all, this was intended to increase security so that people cannot move freely around the building.

I welcome the **themed trail project**. This is something I have been calling for a long time: a pleasant walking path in the lower forest on an exciting theme, interactive. In the ordinary budget, a project *Beiepad* with 20,000 is also planned. Where is this planned?

How far has the **camera inspection of the sewer system** progressed? By when is it to be completed? Only half of the planned budget was used.

How far have we got with the pilot **project avertissement crues**? What exactly is being implemented there?

Where does the project of the **maisons bi-familiales in Wénkel** stand? Almost the entire 2025 budget is being postponed to 2026. Is there a problem somewhere, or where do we currently stand?

As far as the **playground** concept is concerned, a study was carried out. In the last budget meeting and later again in a municipal council meeting, when a project for a new playground was presented, I asked about the results. These were presented to the municipal council in a project meeting in September. I consider it important – if such a study already exists – to draw on it, identify weaknesses, and act on the basis of this study. In the meeting mentioned, there was talk of a document in which a data sheet was prepared for each playground. After the meeting, I asked whether we as council members could also receive this document. I asked three times, but unfortunately have not received an answer to date. Perhaps today I can get an answer and the document?

And while we are on the subject of playgrounds: what is the problem with the PMR playground near the tennis courts that it is closed more often than it is accessible?

A brief remark on the **Shared Space**: the greening of the Shared Space cost considerable funds, amounting to 270,000 euros. There was also no second cost estimate. And above all, even more parking spaces have now been created. Instead of parking between the tree planters – which is now no longer possible – cars are now simply parked in a full row in front of the trees.

With regard to **cycle paths**: where exactly do we stand with which project? What was implemented this year? What is concretely planned for 2026? For me, these are pieces of information that should, for example, appear in the municipal bulletin in order to keep the population informed about the development of the municipality and very concrete ongoing projects.

Where are we heading with the **Schwall project**? 2.5 million have already been invested. A further 2.4 million are provided for in the budget. How will the whole thing be managed later on? People want information. They were shown the project draft and models, and afterwards they hear nothing more. These are projects where the population should be regularly informed so that no questions and no rumours arise.

Centre Atert: that the facade now unfortunately has to be renovated is regrettable, but in this condition there is no way around it. However, there is still a high amount of 650,000 euros earmarked for air conditioning. This is probably necessary: in summer it is very warm, but on normal days it is often also too cold. Will the problem with the roof skylights also be resolved? Very often it was far too warm in the hall. And when one asked for the skylights to be opened, the answer was that they could no longer be closed afterwards. Installing air conditioning because of the heat is good, but functioning windows are also important.

Then a brief question on the **recettes extraordinaires**: has the matter with the insurance companies following the floods concerning the Niki Bettendorf sports hall and the Centre Atert now been settled, or is something still outstanding here?

And then on the **recettes ordinaires**: an amount of 12,000 from *loyers – logements pour jeunes* is provided for. What exactly is that? (p. 9) *Dépenses ordinaires*: 50,000 from 01.02.26 for *location immeuble pour logements pour jeunes*.

In addition, there are a number of points from the **dépenses ordinaires** on which I have questions or comments:

The **jetons de présence** of the commissions are slightly higher for 2026 than this year. I assume that this is intended for those commissions that have hardly met or only very rarely in recent times, so that they can meet somewhat more frequently in the future.

Gestion archives (p. 40): this is a new item in the budget. How does this work if a company takes care of it? Where is the archive located? I consider it an important point that archiving is carried out properly and professionally.

The replacement of the **wall covering** in the stairwell of the municipality for 110,000: what will be done there?

Citizens' budget (*Budget participatif*): where do we stand with the implementation of the three projects? Defibrillator, table tennis, optimisation of the Shared Space. I hope that our citizens of Bertrange will once again benefit from the new call and submit their ideas. The phase in which voting subsequently takes place is also important.

400,000 euros are provided for **studies / expert assessments**. I have a few questions on this, first with regard to new projects:

1. A master plan relating to *school infrastructures* is planned. This is certainly extremely important. Bertrange will continue to grow, and school infrastructures as well as other infrastructures should be conceptually thought through. Above all, we do not yet know what the implementation of this alpha project will entail. What is planned, how long is this study supposed to last, and when can results be expected?
2. What are the *analyses financières*?
3. How do you envisage the “*Vélo Mobycon*” concept for Bertrange? Does it also include a concept for bicycle and scooter stands? Some proper stands to which the vehicles can also be secured.

But also questions on studies and projects that have been running for some time:

1. Since 2023, *consulting for the SEA* has been ongoing. Are you satisfied? Does this bear fruit and lead to the desired result?
2. Where do we stand with the *safe school route*, with the *pedestrian guidance system*, with the *plan d'intervention d'urgence*? What about *Sponge City*? What has been implemented in the individual projects? What results are available?

I would welcome it if we, as the municipal council, were also informed from time to time about such projects and not only about the major construction projects.

The law of 07.01.2022 on **accessibilité à tous** concerns *lieux ouverts au public, voies publiques* as well as *bâtiments d'habitation collectifs*. You have now awarded a *commande d'analyse* of 80,000 for the municipality, Atert, Arca and Schauenburg.

Why only these four buildings to begin with? Are new buildings such as the Niki Bettendorf Hall, Duerfhaus, Centre Bureck as well as new shops already compliant because they were built recently? Are no other buildings affected?

Then 25,000 euros are earmarked for **places publiques**, and only the cemetery is listed there. What about other public spaces, such as bus stops, playgrounds, ...?

What about the item **bâtiments d'habitation collectifs**? The building near the castle? Others? The building housing the pharmacy and the paediatrician?

At the **youth centre**, staffing is being increased from 3 FTE to 3.75 FTE for 2026. Is there such a large influx of young people that staffing needs to be increased?

Project Tiny Forest: the first Urban Forest has been created. The 35,000 euros allocated this year – was this the budget estimate for a single project? Does this mean that it is planned to create another or possibly several such small projects, since a budget of the same amount is again provided for next year?

Concours floral: here the concept has changed. How many houses received a prize in the past, when the members of the commission themselves carried out walks to take photos? How many houses have now received a prize since citizens were 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?

Cemetery: 15 new *monuments funéraires* are planned: 12,000 euros. What exactly is meant by this? The family takes care of the gravestone. When budgeting for the cemetery, one should not forget to integrate sufficient greenery – with more hedges and trees around it.

The **old music hall** in the Centre Atert is to be renovated for 380,000 euros. What will be done with this hall? For what purposes will it be used in the future? Will the caretakers receive their new base there? In that case, they would remain nicely central, and rooms would again be freed up in the preschool building that could certainly be used meaningfully for school purposes.

For the **fêtes publiques**, a “*Summer am Parc*” is planned. What can one imagine by that?

For the *Family Day*, we are increasing from a budget of 45,000 last year to now 80,000. That is significant.

The budget of 600,000 for the *Absolut Bartreng*: roughly that amount comes in through all the projects under the *pacte logement*.

On the other hand, I am glad that we are rid of the surf wave (*Surf in Town*) – an enormous budget from which, in my opinion, more non-Bertrange residents than Bertrange residents benefited. With two years of surf wave, one could already have bought a small apartment.

Given the immense budget of the *winter market*, one could perhaps invest a little more to embellish the white tarpaulins that conceal the chalets from behind. One could place a few small fir trees in front of them or have suitable tarpaulins made.

Regarding the *fair (Kirmes)*: what needs to be done to once again have bumper cars, shooting galleries and a funfair? Does this require a larger budget, and do the showmen have to be paid to come? This year, there was only a programme for small children. The slightly older children and the teenagers did not get their money's worth at this year's fair. However, you kept the budget allocation the same as in all previous years.

At this point and repeatedly in municipal council meetings, I have asked for statements of *accounts* for the various festivals and events. This has also happened again recently. However, some statements were from 2025, others from 2024, some from both years. Others, such as the fair, were not listed at all. In addition, each commission prepared its statement differently: sometimes energy costs were charged, sometimes not. Comparisons are therefore practically impossible.

I would be pleased if we, as the municipal council, would continue to receive these statements regularly, and with regard to transparency, I would consider it only right if the members of a commission were also informed about the income and expenditure of their events.

Here in Bertrange, we have a ***children's municipal council***. I consider this to be a wonderful thing, that children can participate in decision-making processes and participation in this way and become familiar with the first foundations of democracy. Thanks go to the teaching staff and the staff of the SEA who accompany this project.

In a municipal council meeting this year, under the item "Info", the report of the 2024/25 school year was presented to us. Since we could not ask any questions on this item, I am now taking this up here:

You have a relatively high budget for *frais de restauration et de réception* and only 2,500 for *équipements divers*. Is this sufficient to implement the various points listed in this report? Or rather: are the applications for improving municipal infrastructures listed under another budget item? Were the applications taken into account:

- a mirror at the bicycle cellar for greater safety?
- at the multisport facility: new nets and better lighting?
- the Box-up project: storage possibilities for sports equipment?

And then one of my favourite topics: the ***school playgrounds***! You took part in an *appel à projets* "More nature in the village". That the project was selected and that the municipality was thus awarded 500,000 euros is of course excellent. This is a substantial share of a project costing 800,000. Who developed this project? Were the children's municipal council or the schoolchildren of the affected cycles, or the teaching staff, also asked for their opinion? What about the other

school playgrounds? Is anything concrete planned for the coming year with regard to defusing conflicts in confined spaces? Or more shade?

These were points that I found in the budget. However, there are a number of ***things that I am missing***.

At the municipal council meeting of 26 September, the ***second aldermen's council statement*** for this legislative period was presented to us. For the second time, you merely delivered a statement, and it was not desired that the opposition be given the floor to respond to it. I do not know what you are afraid of: that you might receive too much praise? Or that you are not open to criticism? But be that as it may.

Seventeen pages, clear priorities to be implemented, significant projects. What is considered significant is, of course, a matter of interpretation.

Some points from your joint aldermen's council statement:

- *Larger storage facilities for associations*: where will these be located, and from when can the associations expect them?
- *Administrative support for associations*: what does this mean in concrete terms?
- *Volunteering* is promoted and recognised: what is this supposed to look like?
- *Padel courts, a pump track, a bouldering facility*: where are these to be built and when?

Many budgets are no longer available. If this is truly important and is to be implemented during this legislative period, then a concept for these and other ideas would already have to be in place now.

I would then like to address another point that concerns ***sport, physical activity and prevention*** – in other words, everything that relates to a healthy lifestyle.

What do we need for this? The right mindset, the courage to tackle it, and networking across many areas. What can help us in this? A ***sports coordinator*** (partially subsidised by the Ministry of Sport) and the right infrastructure.

The aim is to promote sport and physical activity – from the very youngest to the oldest members of our society. Together with proper nutrition (at school, at the SEA, at home), this constitutes prevention, and in this way we can avoid many health problems, relieve pressure on our healthcare system, and do something good for all of us. It is not sufficient, as I was told last year here at this very place in response, to say that we have a sports coordinator at the SEA and that the municipality and the commissions coordinate many things. This goes far beyond that. It requires a person who is exclusively dedicated to this. It requires the right information and awareness-raising campaign.

In order to be able to offer sufficient sport and physical activity – both on an association basis and in the form of courses – from the very important children's gymnastics to courses for adults and seniors, we need the right infrastructure. And for that we urgently need an ***additional sports hall***. A simple, functional hall, so that we do not have to pay rent in neighbouring municipalities and so that parents do not have to organise themselves to take their children to Mamer or to the Geesseknäppchen.

I am slowly coming to the end: without ***good staff***, all the work required for these projects is, of course, not manageable. I am pleased to see a slight increase in staff. When the population grows,

so do the workload and the demands. Even though staffing levels have been increased, there is still room for improvement. Even though the *masse salariale* represents a major expense, we must ensure that our staff are not overburdened.

We practically have no municipal council meeting without someone new being hired again, either because someone has left or because we have to grow. **Personnel management** is a major challenge.

Recently, we have heard in the press about many municipalities where there has been considerable unrest. SYVICOL now offers training courses in the field of personnel management. Are these offers that you also make use of?

I am glad that on the website one can see all the names, who works in which department, so that people know who they are dealing with when they have to contact someone. However, I would be even more satisfied if we could once receive an **organisational chart** with all employees. They are not all on the same level. Who reports to whom, etc.? This is something I have been raising for two years now.

But as I said: without all the staff, municipal life would not function. Therefore, a very big thank-you to everyone for their work and commitment.

Personnel costs (*masse salariale*) have risen from 13.8 to 16.3 million. From 2024 to 2025: nine additional persons. By the end of 2026, it is planned to hire a further 16 persons (FTE/ETP).