

City of Biddeford
City Council
April 1, 2025 at 6:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

1. Roll Call

Council President LaFountain - present
Councilor Lessard - present
Councilor Ortiz - present
Councilor Emhiser - present
Councilor Whiting - excused
Councilor Beaupre - present
Councilor Gross - present
Councilor Belanger - present
Councilor Doughty - present

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adjustment(s) to Agenda

A second executive session will be added for 1 MRS 405 (6) a personnel matters.

4. Public Hearing

4.a City Budget

The public hearing opened at 6:02 pm

Seventeen citizens spoke in support of the McArthur Library. They spoke of its importance to all citizens, young and old, of the many services that it offers and the challenges it faces.

Fourteen citizens spoke in support of the Biddeford Community Gardens. It is a very important service allowing all citizens to grow food and beautify the city. It helps create community connections.

One citizen requested that the Council sell the cable access building.

One citizen spoke in support of proceeding with the skate park.

One citizen spoke in support of Seeds of Hope.

One citizen spoke in support of the APEX bike program.

The public hearing closed at 6:44 pm.

5. Presentation

5.a MaineHousing Overview

Tyler Norod from Westbrook Development Corporation gave a presentation to the Council on Mainehousing's scoring criteria for affordable housing projects.

5.b Comprehensive Plan Update

A memo was sent to the Council with an update on the Comprehensive Plan, it has been added to the meeting archive.

6. Appointments

6.a 2025.30 Approval Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen spoke about a business closing on Main Street, the building was sold and the rent increased.

One citizen complimented the presentation on affordable housing and asked the Council to provide opportunities for citizen input on the comprehensive plan revisions.

One citizen spoke in support of the Recreation Department programs such as Cub Care and asked for improvements to the playground area as soon as possible.

8. Consideration of Minutes

8.a Council Minutes 3-18-25

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9. Orders of the Day

9.a 2025.31 Approval YCEMA Hazardous Materials Response Team Memorandum of Agreement

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Lessard

Fire Chief Best explained that this allows the department to be reimbursed from York County for event response and training. It provides regional support to all departments in the program.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.b 2025.35 Approval / Context Architecture Site Analysis Agreement

Motion: Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.c Remove from Table 2025.24) Approval / Reconstruction Gil Boucher Park Bath House

Item was not removed from Table.

9.d 2025.32 Approval/ Public Works Gilbert Boucher Park Bath House-Rebuild

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Recreation Department Director Lisa Thompson explained the estimate and design.

Councilor Lessard spoke in favor of the item; it goes back to the original design for less money than the most recent bid. He would like there to be a recognition plaque for anyone who works on it.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.e 2025.34 Approval Vacant Building Registration Ordinance

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Public comments – one citizen spoke about the fees and the timeline; both are a little aggressive. The rest is very well thought out.

Councilor LaFountain – motion to amend: Definitions (Section 34-562(B)(1)(iv)) Amend to replace iv. with:

- iv. Agricultural Buildings: Buildings located on properties actively used for agricultural purposes are excluded from this ordinance, provided proper documentation is submitted and approved by the Code Enforcement Office.

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote on the amendment: Unanimous in favor.

Amendment passed.

Councilor LaFountain – motion to amend: Initial Registration Fee (Section 34-562(D)(1)) Amend to change the fee in the second sentence from \$600 to \$0.00 for the first six-month registration period.

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote on the amendment: 7 yeas – Councilors Ortiz, Belanger, Gross, Doughty, Beaupre, Emhiser, and LaFountain.

1 nay – Councilor Lessard.

Amendment passed.

Councilor LaFountain – motion to amend Exceptions for Documented Cases (Section 34-562(B)(1)(B)(ii) Properties subject to specific exceptions as outlined in Section 34-562 change (D) to (E))

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Amendment passed.

Vote on the order as amended: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.f 2025.33 MMA Legislative Policy Committee Members

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

10. Public Addressing the Council

None

11. City Manager Report

Manager Phinney gave an update on the FY23 audit. He provided a list of the items that will be reviewed at the next budget meeting.

12. Other Business

Councilor Beaupre requested that an item be added to future agendas for Councilors to give updates on their committee work.

Councilor Beaupre gave an update on two committees. The Veterans Committee will be presenting the plaque for the General Nutting Bridge on Veterans Day. The Traffic Committee will place a 90-day parking ban on Lester B. Orcutt as a test. The 90 days will begin when the signs are put up in June. The committee will bring the item to the Council if they seek anything beyond the 90 days.

Councilor Lessard asked the City Solicitor if the test ban can be implemented without the Council's approval. City Solicitor Harry Center confirmed that it can.

Councilor Emhiser gave an update on the Wastewater Management Commission; they will be reviewing the budget next week including a competitive analysis of costs. They are also working on the recent DEP consent decree. They will have recommendations for the Council soon.

13. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain did not address the Council at this time.

14. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman spoke about the combined Council/School Committee budget meeting the night before; progress was made and the students provided great food for the group.

He reminded everyone of the free smoke detector installation program happening on April 12th. Details are available on the City's website.

15. Executive Session

15.a Executive Session 1 MRS 405 (6) d Labor Negotiations

15. b. Executive Session 1 MRS 504 (6) a Personnel Matters

Motion to enter executive sessions by Councilor LaFountain at 8:10 pm.

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Motion to exit executive sessions at 9:24 pm by Councilor Belanger.

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

16. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Belanger at 9:24 pm.

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned.