

COUNCIL MEETING

JUNE 21, 2022

NOTE: Due to COVID-19, this meeting was held in-person in the Council Chambers, as well as virtually (via ZOOM),

Mayor Casavant called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Roll Call: William Emhiser, Scott Whiting, Bobby Mills, Amy Clearwater, Norman Belanger, Liam LaFountain, Doris Ortiz, Marc Lessard

Martin Grohman was excused.

The Council and all who were present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustments to the Agenda:

- Add Appointment: Susan Deschambault to Planning Board
- Remove Order of the Day 2022.53

Presentation: Update from Homelessness Task Force

Rev. Shirley Bowen from Seeds of Hope provided an update on what she and her Staff are seeing in terms of unstably housed people. She indicated that the situation is at a crisis point due to folks no longer being able to stay at hotels and with the eligibility limits having dropped.

She shared the following statistics on what Seeds of Hope is dealing with:

- April 2022: served 699 meals and saw 44 new people who had never been to Seeds of Hope
- May 2022: served 741 meals and saw 44 new people
- June 2022 (thus far): served 582 meals and have already seen 30 new people

Additionally:

- ✓ 31 individuals are known to be camping or on the street
- ✓ 10 individuals are known to be sleeping at the train station
- ✓ 13 individuals are couch surfing
- ✓ 6 individuals are either sleeping in an RV or their vehicle
- ✓ 7 individuals claim to be staying at the Thatcher Hotel, thanks to the support of the City's General Assistance Office
- ✓ Seeds of Hope is now fielding at least one call a day, and sometimes up to 5 calls a day from families seeking housing; which is up from 1 or 2 calls a week

Rev. Shirley went on to note that there are no answers for these people – no housing is available. Even if folks have money, there just is no place for folks to go. She shared that people are getting desperate and the community is failing them. The Homelessness Task Force is committed to act, and has formed a coalition of many organizations to try to work through the issue of homelessness.

Unfortunately, Seeds of Hope has missed the deadline for the pre-application for the ARPA Funds. Rev. Shirley asked that the Council grant them the opportunity to submit a late pre-application for the ARPA Funds.

{NOTE: This request will be brought up and voted on during the *Other Business* portion of this meeting}

Public Addressing the Council..(3 minute limit per speaker for up to 15 minutes):

Heart of Biddeford Director Delilah Poupore lent her support for allowing Seeds of Hope to submit a late ARPA application; and noted that the McArthur Library also supports this.

Consideration of Minutes: **June 7, 2022**

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Mills to accept the minutes as printed.

Vote: Unanimous.

Orders of the Day:

2022.47

IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL..JUNE 21, 2022

BE IT ORDERED, that the City Manager or his designee be authorized to convey an eight (8) foot wide drainage easement and maintenance easement along the rear the City acquired parcel

located at 42 Center Street to the abutters, Marc and Sheila Sylvestre, who own the abutting lot at 167 Elm Street in exchange for the Sylvestres granting an easement to the City for the installation, repair and maintenance of the storm drain pipe across their parcel located at 167 Elm Street (Tax Map 38, Lot 147).

Motion by Councilor Mills, seconded by Councilor Clearwater to grant the order.
Vote: Unanimous.

2022.48(a) IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL.....JUNE 21, 2022
BE IT ORDERED, that the City Council of the City of Biddeford hereby authorizes the City Manager, to sign an agreement with Shaw Brothers Construction, Inc., as low bidder for the Pearl Street Reconstruction Project, in the amount of \$3,195,950, contingent upon Economic Development Administration (EDA) authorization to proceed with project award under EDA AN 01-01-15086;

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the City Council of the City of Biddeford hereby authorizes the City Manager, to establish a Pearl Street Reconstruction Management (PSR Management) account in the amount of \$325,000 from the so-called Excess Funds (CIP) as presented initially during the March 22, 2022 FY23 Budget Workshop, for the purpose of Pearl Street reconstruction management, inspections, and contingency. Note: No expenditures are authorized from the PSR Management account unless and until authorized by order of the Biddeford City Council or otherwise authorized in accordance with purchasing policies of the City of Biddeford.

Funding Note:

Funding for the Pearl Street Reconstruction Project is as follows:

EDA Grant Award.....	\$ 1,156,015
Paving Account (Council Brief for Order 2021.21).....	\$ 250,000
CSO Account (Council Brief for Order 2021.21).....	\$ 50,000
Rt.111/Downtown TIF (Council Brief for Order 2021.21)....	\$ 856,015
Pearl Street Bid Overage (Excess Funds 03/22/22 WS).....	\$ <u>883,920</u>
Total Construction	\$ 3,195,950

PSR Management - includes, construction mgt., inspections, and contingency (Excess Funds 03/22/22 WS)...	\$ <u>325,000</u>
Total Authorization	\$ 3,520,950

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Mills to grant the order.
Vote: Unanimous.

2022.49 IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL...JUNE 21, 2022
BE IT ORDERED, that the City Council of the City of Biddeford does hereby authorize the City Manager to make payment to Sewall of Bangor ME, in the amount of \$201,967 for engineering services associated with the redesign of Pearl Street and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant.

Funding Note: Funding for the project will be covered under the Route 111 Mill Redevelopment TIF (Tax Increment Financing) at 31179-61012.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Whiting to grant the order.
Vote: Unanimous.

2022.48(b) IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL..JUNE 21, 2022
A Resolution of the Biddeford City Council
WHEREAS, the City of Biddeford applied for and was awarded a 50% matching grant by the Economic Development Administration (EDA or the Agency), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), reference EDA AN 01-01-15086, “the Grant”; and

WHEREAS, the Grant supports the Pearl Street Reconstruction project; and

WHEREAS, the initial probable cost estimate for the Pearl Street Reconstruction Project is \$2,312,030; and

WHEREAS, the Grant requires certain terms and conditions, including but not limited to an assurance that matching project funds and any project overage are available, committed and are not otherwise encumbered; and

WHEREAS, the bids for the Pearl Street Reconstruction Project exceed the initial probable cost estimate by \$883,920, “the overage”; and

WHEREAS, the City of Biddeford is responsible for the overage and must provide EDA with an assurance that sufficient funds exists to cover the overage in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Grant;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Biddeford affirms the necessary funds, in the amount of \$883,890, for the for Pearl Street Reconstruction Project are available and committed to the project, and are not otherwise encumbered.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Whiting to affirm the Resolution.
Vote: Unanimous.

2022.50) Authorization/Sale of Property at 587 South Street

Staff asked that this item be removed from the agenda without prejudice; stating that there may be a benefit for the City to retain this property to possibly incorporate it into a larger conservation easement.

2022.51

**IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL..JUNE 21, 2022
Resolution Requesting Increased State Involvement for
Better Outcomes for Those Unhoused**

WHEREAS, the number of community members who are unhoused is continuing to increase rapidly; and

WHEREAS, the current increase in housing costs, especially rental costs are increasing at rates that are exceeding inflationary rates; and

WHEREAS, those housing costs increases are happening throughout the entire State of Maine; and

WHEREAS, individuals who are without housing are statistically going to be adversely impacted more by other contributing factors than the population as a whole; and

WHEREAS, these known contributing factors include domestic violence, behavioral health, substance abuse, human trafficking and others; and

WHEREAS, the State of Maine, with federal COVID funds during the pandemic, provided temporary relief by utilizing hotels as a short term solution; and

WHEREAS, those hotels are no long available, leaving those in need without other viable alternatives; and

WHEREAS, municipalities are required by the Maine Law to provide housing assistance through the General Assistance Program; and

WHEREAS, municipalities, including the City of Biddeford, do not have the expertise or resources to provide the additional services which would be beneficial to many of the community members who are unhoused; and

WHEREAS, the federal government, through various policies, including but not limited to those that impact Asylum Seekers, are contributing to the challenges of serving the needs of the unhoused; and

WHEREAS, finding viable long term solutions for the growing number of folks without housing will require participation and resources from outside of the municipality;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the City Council and Mayor of the City of Biddeford, join with other municipal leaders in Maine to request that the Governor of the State of Maine, supported by Legislative Leadership, create a formal Working Group of both elected and professional staff to make improvements to the state and local responses for those who are unhoused.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Whiting to affirm the Resolution.
Vote: Unanimous.

2022.52

IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL...JUNE 21, 2022

BE IT ORDERED, that the City Council of the City of Biddeford does hereby cancel the City Council Meeting of July 5, 2022.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Whiting to grant the order.

Vote: 7/1; Councilor Lessard opposed.

Councilors Emhiser, Whiting, Mills, Clearwater, Belanger, LaFountain and Ortiz in favor.

Motion carries.

Appointments:

IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL...JUNE 21, 2022

ORDERED, that I, Alan M. Casavant, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, do hereby re-designate:

Michael Cantara
5 Cherry Lane
Ward 7

from an Associate Member to a Regular Member on the *Planning Board*, replacing Bruce Benway, for a term to expire in December 2022.

Motion by Councilor Lessard, seconded by Councilor Clearwater to confirm the appointment.

Vote: Unanimous.

IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL...JUNE 21, 2022

ORDERED, that I, Alan M. Casavant, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, do hereby appoint:

Susan Deschambault
100 Saco Falls Way
Ward 5

to the *Planning Board*, replacing Michael Cantara as an Associate Member, for a term to expire in December 2022.

Motion by Councilor Clearwater, seconded by Councilor Mills to confirm the appointment.

Vote: Unanimous.

Public Addressing the Council..(5 minute limit per speaker; 30 minute total time limit):

There were no public comments.

City Manager Report:

City Manager James Bennett had the following items:

- 1) He offered to forward the Homelessness Resolution to his colleagues throughout the State in an effort to gain more support for increased State involvement on this issue
- 2) As was discussed during the Finance Committee meeting, Finance Director Nichole Wood has taken on the task of cleaning up Munis and notably bringing the Finance and Human Resource modules up to date. Also, he pointed out that the Finance Committee received an investment report.
- 3) He shared that due to some of the most recent changes within the City's workplace policies, the City has been able to hire a couple of good candidates. The thanked the Council for their support in making the workplace policies.
- 4) As the City approaches the FY22 budget year end, he noted that we will end on a successful note; and with an increase in the fund balance.

Other Business:

Councilor Clearwater: made a motion to allow Seeds of Hope to submit a late pre-application for ARPA Funds based on extenuating circumstances which have delayed their application; seconded by Councilor Whiting.

Motion by Councilor Belanger, seconded by Councilor Clearwater to amend the motion to allow that any organization be allowed to submit a pre-application for the ARPA Funds by June 30, 2022.

Vote on amendment: Unanimous.

Vote on original motion, as amended: Unanimous.

Councilor Mills: noted that the Town of Parsonfield is open one Saturday a month in the morning to process vehicle registrations. He wonders if the City should consider offering the same hours in light of the new City Hall business hours.

Councilor Lessard: asked about the handicapped accessible parking at the beaches and the fact that folks with handicapped accessible plates need to purchase a beach permit. He asked the City Solicitor to look into this to determine if this goes against Maine Statutes.
{City Solicitor Harry Center was able to answer that this does not go against any State Law}

Councilor Emhiser: shared that the Finance Committee had a good discussion about the financial position of the City and he is pleased to see the City is in good standing.

Councilor LaFountain: has a constituent who recently reached out to him about the no left turn on Booth Street. He went to Booth Street to walk the area and talk with the residents there. 19 of the 20 residents he spoke with want to keep the no left turn on Booth Street, which represents 11 of the 12 homes there. Residents are concerned with speed in that area; as well as the fact that big trucks go through there even though it is posted as a no through trucks area. One suggestion is to put a stop sign at the corner of Booth and Grayson Streets.

Councilor Ortiz: attended the June Art Walk this past Friday and was pleased at how well attended the event was. She recognized the fact that the City supported the raising of the Pride Flag for this month, and attributes the City's support to making all individuals feel welcome.

Council President Addressing the Council: Councilor Belanger wished his wife a Happy Birthday. He also recognized her and all the significant others of the Mayor and Councilors for their support.

Mayor Addressing the Council: Mayor Casavant reminded folks that LaKermesse is this coming weekend, beginning on Thursday with a car show at St. Louis Field; and then the festival to run through Sunday. He is pleased that a delegation from Quebec will be attending this year.

He announced that the Music in the Park series is starting June 22nd.

He congratulated the Girls' Softball team on becoming State Champs.

Motion by Councilor Belanger, seconded by Councilor Clearwater to adjourn.

Vote: Unanimous.

Time: 6:51 p.m.

Attest by: _____
Carmen J. Bernier, City Clerk