

City of Biddeford
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
April 08, 2024 5:30 PM City Hall - 2nd Floor Conference Room

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/3934157509?omn=97859271793>

Meeting ID: 393 415 7509
One tap mobile
• +1 646 931 3860 US
• +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
• +1 305 224 1968 US
• +1 309 205 3325 US
• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
• +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Status:

1. Call to Order

2. Discussion Items:

- 2.1. Approval of Minutes
[March 11 2024 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)
- 2.2. Meeting Procedures / Amendments
[Committee Participation Guide 2024.pdf](#)
- 2.3. Attendance Policy
[DEI Committee Ordinance.pdf](#)
- 2.4. Revised Diversity Calendar
[FINAL Diversity Calendar 2023.pdf](#)
[2024 Diversity Calendar \(w_ potential edits\).pdf](#)
- 2.5. Upcoming Events / Proclamations
[Eid-Al-Fitr Proclamation.pdf](#)
- 2.6. File Sharing Update
- 2.7. Public Comment Policy

3. Adjourn:

DEI Committee Meeting Minutes - March 11th, 2024 Meeting

Status

1. Called to order at 5:32 PM.

Present: Sarai Manyiel, Andrew Lovley, Breese Reagle, Shelly Gibson, Maura Oakes, Anne Morrissey, Flo Leighton, Danica Lamontagne, Scott Whiting, Syed Zafar, Bistra Nikiforova

2. Discussion Items

- 2.1 Introductions

Group members introduced themselves.

- 2.2 Officer Appointments and Term Limits

Shelly shared information about how term limits were decided and reminded members that they will be able to reapply at the end of their term. Member term limits are the following:

1 year: Andrew, Sarai, Syed

2 years: Scott, Breese, Anne

3 years: Flo, Bistra, Maura

Danica will send the link to all for the DEI committee page so folks can review if needed.

Bistra nominated Flo as Chair. Bistra spoke to her devotion to the topic and experience with DEI work both inside and outside of the Committee. Anne seconded the nomination. Flo accepted the nomination.

Flo nominated Andrew as Chair. Andrew declined the nomination.

Scott nominated himself as Vice Chair. Anne seconded the nomination.

Breese, seconded by Bistra, motioned to accept the nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. The motion was unanimously approved.

- 2.3 Committee Participation Guide Q&A

Shelly shared the Committee Participation Guide with the group and explained how and why it was created. She also highlighted the appendix that the DEI Committee created last year that is intended to serve as a guide for community engagement efforts by all City Committees.

- Flo and Shelly will work ahead of time to build the agenda for future meetings. If members have items that they would like to be on the agenda, they should submit them to Shelly and Flo. We generally can't change the agenda right before the meeting or in the meeting, particularly if the item to be added is something that would be of interest to the public. Generally, meeting agendas are made available about a week to five days before the meeting.

- Syed asked if Flo will make a call for agenda items or if members should reach out to Flo if they have an idea. Either option is encouraged.
- Not all meetings have to have public comment. The Committee can decide whether or not to open public comment for specific items, create a public comment period, or close all meetings to public comment. The committee discussed concerns about possible hateful comments at meetings.
- All Committee business should be conducted using your City email address.
- There is a Maine law about under what circumstances allow a Committee member to participate remotely in public meetings. A copy of the policy is included in the packet.
- Committee members were reminded about the Freedom of Access Act.
- Committee members asked about where they can store files and how they can collaborate on editing documents. Danica will ask for further guidance from staff on this item.
- Anne asked if the Committee will set attendance and/or communication expectations. Shelly suggested that we add that item to a future agenda.
- Bistra requested that we share the Committee's mission, vision and values with the full Committee and Shelly agreed to do this.

Bistra asked the Committee members what their areas of interest are. She shared that the previous Committee had a Policy subcommittee and an Education/Outreach subcommittee. Breese and Sarai are both former educators and interested in education work. Flo is interested in outreach and events and building partnerships with other groups. Maura has advocacy experience through Out Maine. Syed shared that he was driven to join the Committee partly to offer representation for the Iraqi youth in the community. Anne wanted to join the Committee as a response to gentrification she saw happening in the City. Flo shared that she is interested in supporting the unhoused population. Bistra is interested in topics related to poverty and how that can amplify other social inequalities.

Shelly shared that there is a staff Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee in the City as well. That group has been discussing how to talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion work, and the local/national rhetoric around those terms.

2.4 Select Monthly Meeting Time(s)

Typical meetings are held 5:30 PM – 7 PM, with the ability for the Committee to extend the meeting with a majority vote of the present members. The group decided to keep the meeting date of the second Monday of the month. The next meeting will be Monday, April 8th.

2.5 Monthly Events (updates)

During the first 2 years of the Committee, a Diversity calendar of events was created. This list and celebrations/events have been used in the following ways: preparing proclamations for the Mayor to read at Council meetings, submitting articles to the

Biddeford Beat (the City's email newsletter), and collaborating with other organizations on events.

McArthur Library has been an enthusiastic and helpful partner on recent DEI Committee events. In February, they hosted a collaborative event about the forced removal of biracial residents on Malaga Island, with the support of Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Biddeford High School Multicultural Student Union. There were about 50 people present and very engaged. In November, for Indigenous Peoples Day, they collaborated with the Committee on a screening of Fighting Indians, a documentary about the last remaining racist mascot in Skowhegan, Maine.

Bistra suggested that we collect email addresses at events of people who are interested in engaging with the Committee at future events.

Sarai shared information about the upcoming Community Iftar. Breese suggested adding the Cambodian New Year to the calendar. Shelly shared that she has drafted an updated calendar for 2024 and will share it with the Committee. Flo suggested that we review the calendar at the next meeting.

Anne shared an update about Pride Month and the Heart of Biddeford Pride Committee. On June 1st, there will be a flag raising at City Hall. The group is coordinating with Saco, the Kennebunks, and Arundel on collaborative events. Shelly will find out the date of the Pride Committee's next meeting and share it with the Committee.

Syed will share a write-up with Danica about Ramadan to put in an upcoming Biddeford Beat.

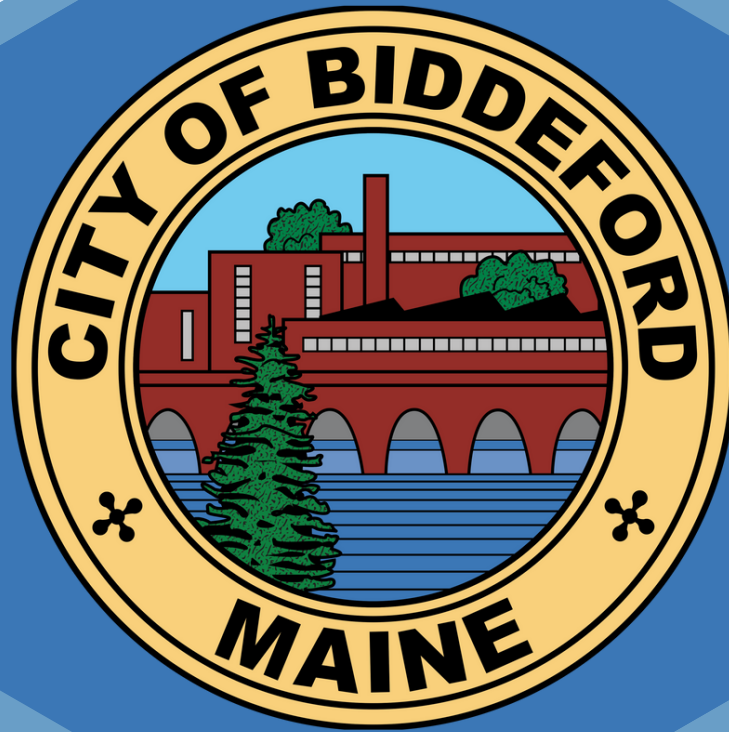
Flo suggested a proclamation for Ramadan. This may not be possible this year due to timing. Anne also suggested including weekly information about Ramadan in the Biddeford Beat.

Syed asked why a proclamation is beneficial. Flo explained that the Mayor reads them out loud at City Council meetings so it brings further awareness to the topic. Shelly also shared that she hopes that they make people feel seen and like a part of the community when the proclamation is read and submitted into public record. Proclamations can also be made specific to the community to recognize local groups or upcoming events.

Bistra asked that we gather the list of past proclamations that we have completed when we discuss the calendar.

Anne motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Scott. Vote: unanimous.

3. Meeting Adjourned at 7:02 PM.



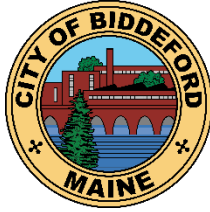
CITY OF BIDDEFORD

COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION GUIDE

UPDATED: JANUARY 2024

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Congratulations on your appointment and thank you for volunteering your time for the betterment of the community. The work of the City is made possible thanks to dedicated volunteers like you, and your service and expertise is appreciated and valued.

This guidebook was created to ensure that all volunteers are receiving consistent information, to help guide you through the process of serving on a Board, Committee or Commission, and to facilitate the Committee's ability to work effectively. From here on, the term Committee will be used in this document and will refer to Boards and Commissions as well.

In addition to this guidebook, there is a Staff Liaison from the City assigned to each Committee that you should reach out to if you have any questions. Your work plays a critical role in the success of the City.

Process for Joining a Committee

- Each Committee has a maximum number of available seats. Committee vacancies are listed on the City website. If there is a vacancy on a Committee that you are interested in, you may apply using the online application form or printing a copy of the form and bringing it to City Hall or mailing it to the City Clerk.
- Once an application is completed and submitted, the Mayor reviews it. If approved, the application is placed on an upcoming City Council agenda for confirmation of the Mayor's appointment. The Mayor is the appointing authority for all committee members.
- The applicant will receive by email a notification of the date and time of the expected confirmation as well as instructions on how to access an assigned city email account and information on the Maine Freedom of Access Act. Applicants do not need to attend the confirmation meeting but are invited to do so if they would like.

- Committee members will need to get sworn in and return the completed FOAA form to the City Clerk before the first meeting if possible. All communication relative to your work on the Committee should be done via your city email. There is an expectation as a Committee member that you check your City email weekly, and in the days prior to any meetings or deadlines.
- Each Committee member is appointed for a specific term, or duration of time. You will be informed of the length of your term at the time of your appointment. The month before your term is due to end, you will receive a letter asking if you wish to remain on the Committee. If you do wish to continue, most renewals will be confirmed at the first City Council meeting in the month of January. If you choose to resign prior to the end of your term, please do so in writing via email to both the Staff Liaison as well as the Mayor so that your vacancy may be filled in a timely manner.

Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA)

The Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) is a state statute that is intended to ensure that government proceedings are open and transparent to the public. The FOA act (FOAA) defines public records as, “any written, printed or graphic matter or any mechanical or electronic data compilation from which information can be obtained, directly or after translation into a form susceptible of visual or aural comprehension, that is in the possession or custody of an agency or public official of this State or any of its political subdivisions, or is in the possession or custody of an association, the membership of which is composed exclusively of one or more of any of these entities, and has been received or prepared for use in connection with the transaction of public or governmental business or contains information relating to the transaction of public or governmental business.” (Title 1, Chapter 13.1 §402)

The Maine Open Meeting law is included in the Maine Freedom of Access Act. The Maine Open Meeting Law establishes the ways in which public meetings are conducted and it applies to all meetings where business that affects the citizens of the state have occurred.

There are additional safeguards in place for unintended or “chance” meetings. These are governed by the Right to Know law. Unintended meetings are illegal under the Right to Know Law unless adequate notice is given and the public is allowed to attend. An unintended meeting occurs when at least a quorum (majority) of a Committee discusses City business in a public or private setting, such as at a store, restaurant, or by telephone. Committee members are not legally prevented from meeting socially outside the public arena; however, should a chance meeting occur, every effort should be made to avoid discussing public business.

As an example, if committee members want to meet to tour a City property or to gather and discuss City business in a non-meeting setting and a quorum will be present, the meeting must be posted.

Electronic Communications

Any communications between Committee members via phone, email, text message or any other electronic communication method outside of a posted meeting must be limited to non-substantive business such as scheduling or other administrative business only.

Substantive discussions or deliberations relative to public business involving three or more members that occur via email, telephone or other electronic technologies are a violation of the Maine Open Meeting Law and are also subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). Under the law, there is no distinction between written and electronic records. This is why limiting Committee business to your City email is so important. Use of your personal email on any electronic device for City business opens your personal accounts to FOAA requests that must be disclosed if requested. Replying all to a group email or sending group text messages are other ways in which committee members may inadvertently open themselves up to discussions that should take place at public meetings.

There should be no expectation of privacy by City employees or Committee members in their use of electronic mail. All e-mails and e-mail attachments relating to your work or participation on a Committee are likely considered public records and therefore subject to public inspection under the FOAA.

Code of Ethics

All Committee members are bound by the following Code of Ethics.

(1) Officials shall view service to the City as an opportunity to serve the public, state and nation as the best means to promote the City of Biddeford and its citizens. We are working to make Biddeford the best place to live, work and do business.

(2) Officials must maintain a courteous tone, especially in reference to any divergence of opinion and shall avoid injecting any personal note into discussions or debate. Officials must never attack or make any allusion to the motives of another official.

(3) Officials shall remember at all times that they have no legal authority within the City outside the scope of their position, and shall conduct their relationships with the City of Biddeford staff, the local citizenry, and all media communications in recognition of their authority.

(4) Officials shall not interfere with the daily administration of City business.

(5) Officials shall listen to all citizens and shall refer all complaints or concerns to the proper authorities.

(6) Officials shall not criticize City employees publicly, but shall make such comments to the City Manager for investigation and action, if necessary.

(7) Officials shall make decisions only after all facts bearing on a question have been presented and discussed.

(8) Officials shall not disclose the confidential business of the City to unauthorized persons.

(9) No official shall be permitted to vote on any question when their private rights or interests, distinct from public interest, is immediately involved.

(10) Officials shall take notice of the date and time that meetings at which their attendance is expected are scheduled and shall punctually attend all meetings unless for good cause they are unavailable.

Committee Structure

Each Committee has a Chair. Some Chairs are appointed by the Mayor while others are elected by the members of the Committee. Many Committees also have a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary that are elected by the members of the Committee.

Each Committee will also have an assigned Staff Liaison to help support the work of the Committee. The Staff Liaison may not vote but is available to provide guidance and fulfill requests for information. They are also responsible for posting the agenda on the City website no less than 48 hours before the meeting.

Meeting Schedules and Attendance

Most Committees have a regular meeting time that is listed with the Committee's information on the City website. Other Committees meet only on an as-needed basis. The Staff Liaison or Committee Chair will provide information on your first meeting date following your appointment.

Committees will not meet on City holidays.

Committee meetings may be cancelled if City Hall is closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies.

Attendance at Committee meetings is expected as a part of your commitment to serve. Some Committees have agreed upon Committee norms that define expectations for attendance.

Agendas

The Chairperson works with the Staff Liaison to craft the agenda. Before the meeting, the Staff Liaison will have a discussion with the Chair about proposed agenda items.

Members requesting items being placed on the agenda should include a short description of the item and should submit their request to both the Chair and the Staff Liaison. The Chair should consider the following when creating an agenda:

- Consider the order of the items on the agenda.
 - Is the Committee being respectful of people’s time?
- Consider the order of the backup documents.
 - Are the agenda materials easy to follow?
- Consider the title of the agenda items and supporting documents
 - Does the title of the document accurately reflect its contents?
 - Will the title raise red-flags unnecessarily?
 - The title of each backup document should include the date first in the following format: YYYYMMDD. This will assist staff with organizing records of meeting materials.
- Copies of the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting, and pertinent information should be provided to the Committee and posted online at least 48 hours before the meeting. The agenda must also be posted on the City Hall bulletin board at least 24 hours before the meeting.
- Every effort should be made to avoid adding new items that will require a vote to the agenda for a meeting after it has been published. If an item *must* be added, the published agenda must be updated to officially note an “Adjustment to the Agenda” and any supporting materials must be uploaded and published by noon on the day of the meeting. If the item is expected to be particularly controversial, it is strongly recommended that you wait to consider the item at a future meeting. New items may not be taken up for discussion during the meeting if they were not included on the agenda or as an adjustment.
- Any member of a Committee may request that items be placed on the agenda and strong deference should be given to all requests, unless the Chair determines the matter is outside the authority of the Committee.

Minutes

Minutes must be kept for each public meeting. It should be determined who will take minutes at the beginning of the meeting prior to undertaking any business. Minutes do not have to include every detail of the meeting but must include:

- The date and time of the meeting
- Attendance of the Committee members
- All motions made and who made them
 - The person seconding the motion and the vote of each member, whether the vote is in favor, opposed or the Committee member abstained. If the vote is unanimous, it can be labeled as such and each individual vote does not need to be recorded.

If there is discussion, a short summary of the discussion should be included. An example of how meeting minutes will look is included below.

City of Biddeford
<i>Committee Name</i>
Date, Location
Status: 1. Call to Order The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. 2. Roll Call The following members were present: 3. Approval of the Minutes (if applicable) The Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes. ____ moved the motion. ____ made a motion to second. The motion passes unanimously. 4. Agenda Item (i.e. Diversity Calendar – Events & Celebrations) For Indigenous People’s Day (Oct. 9th) & Native American Heritage Month (November), ____ offered to ask the Mayor if he would be willing to read the Land Acknowledgement that was adopted as part of the comp plan at the next City Council meeting. The group agreed this was a good idea. The Staff Liaison offered to put together some ideas for November events, publications, etc. and another committee member volunteered to support that effort. 5. Agenda Item 6. Adjournment The Chair closed the meeting at 7:00pm.

The minutes from the previous meeting should be included on the agenda of the next meeting for approval. Once minutes are approved, the Staff Liaison will upload them to the City's website for recordkeeping purposes. It is important to keep up with Committee minutes to keep the public informed about Committee activities. With few exceptions, Maine law requires that minutes for all public proceedings be made available to the public within a reasonable period of time after the proceeding.

Quorum

There must be a quorum, meaning a majority (more than half) of the regular members of the committee size present, to hold a meeting. If it is found before the meeting that less than a quorum is available, the meeting should be cancelled. If the lack of a quorum becomes known as the members are gathering, the attending members should note that no hearing or meeting will be held in the absence of a quorum. A discussion may take place, but no formal voting action may be taken and minutes are still required.

Meeting Procedures

Decorum and procedures during meetings are to be maintained by the Chairperson. In performing this duty, the Chair will moderate according to the dictates of reason, established by committee practice, and will follow any applicable law. The Vice Chair may run the meeting if the Chair is unavailable.

The Chairperson generally has the right of seconding but not initiating motions.

During discussions, the Chairperson should allow only one member to speak at a time. When a member has the floor, they are not to be interrupted unless they are off topic, in which case the Chair may ask the person to get back on topic or finish speaking.

All members should refrain from using poor, harmful, disrespectful or inappropriate language during meetings.

The Chair, and only the Chair, may recognize someone to speak. This includes Committee members and citizens. A Committee member should not call on

someone in an audience to speak. Everything goes through the Chair. If the Chair does not notice another member or a citizen that wishes to speak, then a member may get the attention of the Chair to bring it to their attention.

The Chair should recognize Committee members and audience members equally, even if they have differing views. Committee members should act in a responsible and professional manner. The Committee should have the opportunity to discuss an agenda item before opening the discussion to the public.

It is important to note that not all agenda items are public hearings and it is the discretion of the Chair to allow public comment.

Differences of opinions should be encouraged as discussion; however, personal attacks should not be tolerated and the Chair has the right to halt debate if personal attacks occur.

Roberts Rules of Order

All meetings should be conducted using Roberts Rules of Order. A short introduction to Roberts Rules is attached to this guide.

It is important to note that in order for a decision made by the Committee to be binding, there must be a motion made to take that action. Another member of the Committee must second that action. After discussion about the motion, there must be a vote of all members. If the item receives a majority vote, it passes.

Conflict of Interest

Committee members should be aware of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest as they relate to the work of the Committee. Examples of conflicts of interest could include if the Committee member or a member of their family would potentially profit from the action of the Committee.

As a Committee member, if you are asked to take an action that you believe would cause a reasonable person to question your work or give the appearance of a conflict of interest, you should disclose the conflict immediately to the Staff Liaison and the Committee Chair prior to any discussion or voting on the issue.

Criteria for Virtual Participation in Meetings

All Committee meetings are held in a hybrid format to allow members of the public to participate in City business remotely. Committee members are expected to be physically present for meetings unless certain criteria are met. These criteria are outlined by the State of Maine and in the City of Biddeford's Remote Meeting Participation Policy, which is attached to this guide.

If you believe that you meet the criteria to participate remotely in a meeting, you will need to notify the Chair and Staff Liaison in advance.

Using Zoom to Run Meetings

The Staff Liaison will make Zoom Webinar information available to the public and to Committee members along with the meeting agenda. If you will be participating in a meeting via Zoom, you will need to register for a free Zoom account at www.zoom.us and log into it before joining the call.

Committees use a Zoom webinar, as opposed to a Zoom meeting. This means that Committee members must be made a "Participant" in order to share their audio and video. Members of the public will participate as viewers of the webinar, where they are unable to participate in discussions unless they raise their hand and are called upon. The Staff Liaison will serve as the "host" for the meeting and will inform the Chair when someone on the Zoom call would like to participate.

All votes taken during a remote public meeting will be by roll call vote that can be seen and heard by other members of the meeting body and the public. If an individual member of the Committee is participating remotely in a hybrid meeting, their vote should be stated out loud for the meeting record.

Social Media Policy

Committee members may not establish any website identity, account, page, profile or site in the name of or on behalf of the City or Committee apart from the City website that is managed by City staff. They also may not use the City of Biddeford logo to represent themselves on a personal social media account.

Speaking on Behalf of the Committee

Members of a Committee are not authorized to speak on behalf of the full Committee unless they were designated to do so by an act of the Committee that took place at a public meeting.

Media inquiries to a Committee should be forward to the Staff Liaison to address.

Subcommittee Meetings

Some Committees may elect to create Subcommittees that meet outside of regular meeting times. These meetings should be publicly noticed on the City website and made accessible to the public.

Meeting Accessibility

Interpretation at meetings for non-English speaking and deaf or hard of hearing residents will be made available with at least 48-hour advanced notice. Requests may be made either in person in the City Manager's Office at Biddeford City Hall (205 Main Street), in writing via email to contactus@biddefordmaine.org, or by calling 207-284-9313. Notice of these reasonable accommodations will be provided in all public hearing notices. Language assistance services and auxiliary aids will be provided upon request for informational flyers, plan materials, and other comparable public information tools with the goal of informing and encouraging robust citizen participation in the processes outlined herein.

Best Practices for Engagement

For additional guidance on best practices for meetings, events, and community engagement efforts by Committees, see Appendix 3.

Appendix 1: Remote Meeting Participation Policy

City of Biddeford REMOTE MEETING PARTICIPATION POLICY

Purpose:

Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 403-B, a municipality may continue to allow members of its various boards, committees, commissions, including city council, and the public to participate in public meetings by remote methods upon adoption of a written policy. This policy satisfies the legal and administrative requirements needed to allow remote participation.

Definitions:

Hybrid Public Meeting - means a public meeting consisting of a combination of in-person and remote participation, where there must be at least one member of the public meeting body present at the specified meeting location.

Remote Public Meeting – means a public meeting consisting of remote participation by all members of the meeting body and the public by remote methods.

In-Person Meeting – means a public meeting held in-person with no remote two-way participation option(s) for the public or participating members of the public meeting body.

Remote Methods - means telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may include other means when such means are necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability. Public proceedings may not be conducted by text-only means such as e-mail, text messages or chat functions.

Meeting Body - means any of the various City of Biddeford public boards, committees, commissions, including city council.

Applicability:

This policy, as may be amended from time to time, applies to all boards, committees, commissions, including city council (meeting body). Municipal staff and each respective meeting body chairperson or assigned alternate shall ensure compliance with this policy.

Unless otherwise specified, all public meetings of the city meeting bodies shall be conducted as hybrid meetings.

Requirements:

1. All hybrid and remote public meetings must be properly noticed. The notice must include the means by which the public may access the meeting remotely, currently through Zoom, and will provide a method for disabled persons to request necessary accommodation to access the meeting. Notice will also identify a location where the public may attend a hybrid meeting in person. Notice timelines and format shall comply with existing meeting body rules or requirements and any applicable charter, ordinance, policy, or bylaw.
2. The public meeting body will make all documents and materials to be considered by the public meeting body available, electronically or otherwise, to the public who attend remotely for hybrid and remote meetings to the same extent customarily available to the public who attend

in person, provided no additional costs are incurred by the City. This requirement shall be satisfied upon publication of agenda materials on the city website and agenda software, currently Granicus.

3. All votes taken during a hybrid or remote public meeting will be by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, or heard if using audio technology only, by other members of the meeting body and the public. A member of the meeting body who participates remotely will be considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting.
4. All meeting body members are expected to be physically present for the public meeting except when being physically present is not practical. Reasons for remote attendance may include:
 - a. An Emergency - the existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the entire public meeting body to meet by remote methods;
 - b. Illness, Physical Condition, or Distance - illness, other physical condition or temporary absence from the jurisdiction of the meeting body that causes a member of the meeting body to face significant difficulties traveling to and attending in person;
 - c. Geography of the Public Meeting Body's Influence - with respect to a public meeting body with statewide membership or influence, significant distance a member must travel to be physically present; and
 - d. Geography of the Public Meeting Body's Jurisdiction - The area of the public body's jurisdiction includes geographic characteristics that impede or slow travel, including but not limited to islands not connected by bridges.
5. A determination as to a member of a meeting body's ability to participate remotely shall be made by the meeting body's chairperson or assigned alternate in consultation with the assigned staff representative and/or city manager or assigned alternate.
6. A public body member shall provide notice to the respective chairperson as soon as practical if attendance at a scheduled public meeting is impractical.
7. Public attendance at a proceeding will not be limited solely to remote methods except under the conditions in paragraph 4, subparagraph (a).

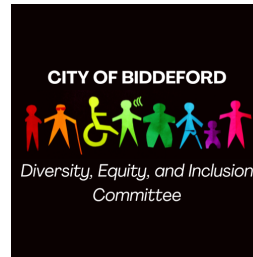
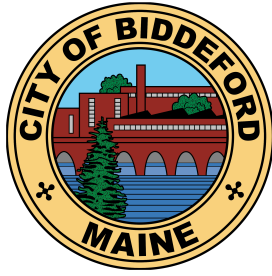
Limitations:

1 M.R.S. § 403-B, does not allow regional school unit budget meetings held pursuant to Title 20-A, section 482-A to be conducted using remote methods.

This policy will remain in force indefinitely unless amended or rescinded.

Adopted by the Biddeford City Council: July 20, 2021 by Order 2021.82

Planning Board Ratification Date: August 4, 2021



Best Practices for Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Community Engagement

The City of Biddeford aims to create an atmosphere of inclusion and belonging across all areas of our municipal work. While this is an ambitious endeavor indeed, it is also one that can be exemplified by the ways in which we engage with the community. Whether we are hosting events, publishing various communications, soliciting input and feedback, and/or building partnerships across the city, each has the capacity to be designed, implemented, and evaluated through a DEI lens. Thus, we hold this truth at the core of our work: that each resident, business owner, student, and/or visitor of Biddeford, particularly those who have been the most marginalized, does not have to question whether or not they were thought of during the planning process; it will simply be true.

While this document is intended to be a guide (and potentially a checklist) for the planning and execution of varied forms of community engagement, we also recognize that language, context, and best practices are constantly evolving and will need updating. We hope that committees and City government will use the following steps and strategies to plan for and navigate circumstances they may not have considered, or those in need of further investigation.

If you have questions or would like to discuss this document in more detail, please contact the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator (shelly.gibson@biddefordmaine.org) and/or the Assistant to the City Manager (danica.lamontagne@biddefordmaine.org).

Active Engagement

Do members of the community have meaningful opportunities to be informed and involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of public programs that affect them?

- Consider how the community can be engaged across the *Spectrum of Public Participation* (Appendix B):
 - *Inform* the public of the issues and initiatives going on in their community
 - Social media campaign; City website; newsletter; press release; presentation; Public Access programming; paid advertising in newspaper

- *Consult* with the public to identify needs, preferences, or provide feedback on actions taken in the community
 - *Our Biddeford* (Appendix C), the City of Biddeford's online community engagement platform (e.g., surveys, polls); e-mail requests for comment; public hearings; surveys by mail; focus groups; guest speakers
 - *Involve* the public in the planning and implementation of the policies, programs, and decisions that affect them
 - *Our Biddeford*, the City of Biddeford's online community engagement platform (e.g., option analysis, Q&A, mapping); advisory boards
 - *Collaborate* with the public on projects and *empower* them to decide on actions taken in the community
 - *Our Biddeford*, the City of Biddeford's online community engagement platform (e.g., ideas wall, participatory budgeting); partnerships with local organizations; committees; task forces; ballot measures
- *Please refer to the appendix for more information about the *Our Biddeford* platform.

Accessibility

Do members of the community have access to programs and the ability to participate?

- Strive to identify which of the following circumstances might be preventing members of the community from participating, and address/accommodate for each as follows:
 - *Dis/Ability*¹: Choose locations for events that are accessible to everyone, particularly people with wheelchairs or limited mobility. Include subtitles on recordings, and/or provide for the needs of blind/low vision participants and those who are deaf/hard of hearing.
 - *Language*: Provide translation materials and/or translators for members of the community who are English Language Learners.
 - *Literacy*: Use plain language and concise communication, free of jargon and unexplained abbreviations.
 - *Time*: Host events and programs at different times to accommodate varied life/work schedules, and provide recordings/materials for those who are unable to attend.
 - *Location*: Host events and programs at locations that can be easily accessed by community members on their own or via public transportation.

¹ Dis/Ability: The word disability, when spelled without the slash, means that the person is identified by their disability, by what they cannot do. When slashed, this reminds people that people are identified by what they can do. (<https://students.wustl.edu/disability-education-self-study-guide>)

- *Technology*: Provide materials or channels for communication that are easy to find and review online. Include assistive technology² (Appendix A), as well as offline options for those who are less familiar with technology or do not have internet capabilities.

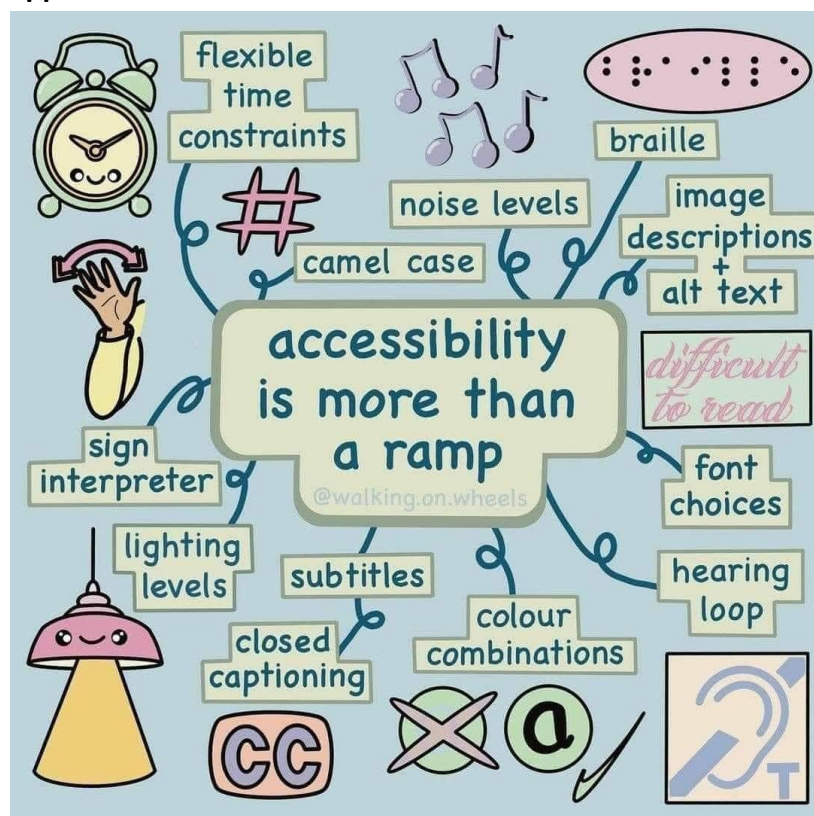
Accountability

Are we responding to feedback and maintaining reciprocal and sustainable relationships within the community, even after an event or project has concluded?

- Build trust and credibility by actively listening to those most often excluded or overlooked (i.e. BIPOC, LGBTQ+ folks, people with disabilities, the unhoused community, etc.).
- When soliciting feedback, acknowledge and validate the concerns, and be transparent about existing (and potential) limitations.
- Continuously review data and meet with constituents to remain familiar with who lives and works in the community.
- Ensure that groups who have been historically marginalized were invited, engaged, felt included, and want to continue to participate in the future.
- Report results once a project is complete so people can understand how their feedback was incorporated when making decisions.
- Following community engagement efforts, debrief and evaluate if participation levels met your expectations and consider what can be done to be more inclusive and equitable.

² Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. (www.atia.org)

Appendix A



Appendix B (www.organizingengagement.org)

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Appendix C - Tools Available on *Our Biddeford*

The City's online community engagement platform, *Our Biddeford*, provides a range of tools to gather feedback and involve residents in the decision-making process for local government. If you would like to use *Our Biddeford* for community engagement, you would set up a "project page" related to the item you are working on. Then, you can select from available tools based on what level of [public participation](#) you are looking to promote – whether you would like to *inform, consult, involve, or collaborate with* the public.

An overview of the available tools is included below. Please contact the Communications Department for more information.

- *Inform* – A project can be set up with the goal of simply informing the community about the work you are doing. You can add images, text and attachments to explain what is happening with the project and outline the timeline for the project to be completed. This method is designed for one-way communication needs, so community members can read and learn but they cannot actively participate in making decisions.
- *Consult*
 - Surveys – This platform can integrate traditional surveys from the City's survey tool, Typeform. These surveys are anonymous and the results are not public. Typeform supports most common survey question formats, including multiple choice questions, short answer questions, rankings, and rating tools such as opinion scales.
 - Quick Polling – A quick poll consists of a single yes/no question, (dis)agree statement, or any other multiple-choice question (e.g., "Would you rather spend all funds on the new park, allocate it to the renovation of older parks, or do a mix of both?"). The identity of the respondents is anonymous but the results of the vote are public.
- *Involve*
 - Option Analysis – With option analysis, admins can provide a limited number of options, ideas, or scenarios on which citizens can vote and/or comment (for example, "Which of these park designs is your favorite?"). With this method, the community cannot add their own ideas, scenarios or options, but they can vote for options they like, leave comments on the proposed ideas, and have conversations with other users.
 - Q&A – Residents can submit questions for the project team to respond to. You can also use this tool to provide answers to anticipated "FAQs".
 - Mapping – Residents can share location-specific feedback on a map of the city. This method is particularly useful for planning and mobility projects. For

example, users could be asked to show on a map where they think new crosswalks should be added.

- *Collaborate*

- Ideation / Ideas Wall – The City provides a prompt, and users are able to freely submit their own ideas or answers. Other participants can vote and comment on the ideas.
- Participatory Budgeting –Using the participatory budgeting tool, community members can provide input on how a certain pool of money will be spent. There are two ways to do this:
 - With “Cumulative Voting”, project organizers set a maximum budget and identify several categories of spending. Participants can say how many dollars they would like to spend on each of those categories.
 - With the “Basket Exercise”, project organizers would identify several specific options for participants to select between that have a known cost. The participants can ‘shop’ for the combination of items/projects that they would like to fund, and cannot exceed the maximum budget that you set.



2023.02 IN BOARD OF CITY COUNCIL... JANUARY 4, 2024

BE IT ORDERED, by the City Council of the City of Biddeford, that Part II: Code of Ordinances, Article IV - Boards, Committees, Commissions be amended to include new Division 13, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee* by adding text as follows:

Sec. 2-326 Established.

The City of Biddeford's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is hereby established.

Sec. 2-327 "Committee" defined.

Unless otherwise indicated, the term "Committee," as used in this division, shall mean the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Sec. 2-328 Composition; appointment of Committee members; terms of office; removal of members.

(a)

The Committee shall consist of 8 volunteer members and one City Councilor. Such members shall be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Members must reside, own a business, or attend school within the City of Biddeford. The Committee shall be staffed by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator or designee.

(b)

The Council will strive to appoint members to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee who bring their lived experiences regardless of their varied identities including but not limited to age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, the dimensions of gender, disability, citizenship, veterans' status, ancestry, national origin, and/or political affiliation, amongst other identities. Appointed members will be expected to think broadly in terms of how issues of racism, sexism, ableism, and other discriminatory and prejudicial biases and systems impact all residents in Biddeford.

(c)

The terms of each member shall be staggered so that no more than three members' terms shall expire in the same year. Upon adoption of this ordinance, there shall be three

members appointed for a three-year term, three members appointed for a two-year term, and three members appointed for a one-year term. Following the completion of these initial terms, all members shall be appointed for three-year terms.

(d)

A member shall automatically be removed from the Committee in the event that they no longer reside in, own a business or attend school in the City of Biddeford or if they are absent for more than three regular meetings per calendar year without being excused by the Chair.

Sec. 2-329 Functions and purposes.

The purpose of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is to create a culture of acceptance and mutual respect that acknowledges differences and strives for equitable outcomes of opportunity, access and inclusion.

It shall be the function of the Committee to:

(1)

Advise the Biddeford City Council on policy decisions related to diversity, equitable outcomes, and inclusion;

(2)

Examine existing City policies, programs and practices through a community lens to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion;

(3)

Make recommendations to the Council on public engagement strategies and methods by which all Biddeford residents have the opportunity to better participate in the decision-making process,

(4)

Provide feedback, guidance, strategies and recommendations to increase community engagement specifically by underrepresented groups.

(5)

Identify local community leaders and building more leadership capacity in Biddeford's diverse communities.

(6)

Perform such other functions as may be required or delegated by the Mayor or City Council.

Sec. 2-330 Filling of vacancies.

Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as original appointments are made.

Sec. 2-331 Quorum.

A simple majority of Committee members shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 2-332 Required vote.

The Committee shall act by majority vote of those present and voting.

Sec. 2-333 Annual election of Chair and Vice Chair.

The Committee shall annually elect a Chair and Vice Chair.

Sec. 2-334 Chair to call meetings and preside.

The Chair shall call all Committee members on three days' notice, unless waived, and shall preside at such meetings.

Sec. 2-335 Vice Chair's power in absence of Chair.

The Vice Chair shall be vested with all the powers of the Chair in case of the Chair's absence or incapacity to serve.

Sec. 2-336 Authority to establish subcommittees.

The Committee may establish subcommittees composed of three or more of its members if the Committee deems it necessary.

Sec. 2-337 Authority of Council to assign powers, duties.

The Council may assign additional powers and duties to the Committee as it deems necessary.

January 4, 2024

Motion: Councilor Schlaver

Second: Councilor Whiting

Councilor Lessard – Motion to Amend to include the terms “beliefs and border security” in Sec 2-328 (b)

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote on the Amendment: 6 nays – Councilors LaFountain, Emhiser, Whiting, Mills, Schlaver and Belanger.

1 yea – Councilor Lessard

Amendment failed.

Councilor Belanger – Motion to Amend Sec 2-328 (a) to add the words “City Manager” before the final word “designee”.

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Vote on the amendment: Unanimous in favor.

Amendment passed.

Councilor Mills- Motion to Table and send to Policy.

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: 5 nays – Councilors Belanger, Emhiser, Schlaver, Whiting and LaFountain.

2 yeas – Councilors Lessard and Mills.

Motion failed.

Councilor Schlaver – Motion to Amend to remove “political affiliation” from Sec 2-238 (b).

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote on the amendment - 4 nays – Councilors Lessard, Emhiser, Whiting, and Mills

3 yeas – Councilors Belanger, Schlaver and LaFountain.

Amendment failed.

Councilor Lessard – Motion to Amend Sec 2-334, change the word “call” to “notify”

Second – Councilor Mills

Vote – Unanimous in Favor.

Amendment passed.

Councilor Lessard – Motion to Amend Sec. 2-336, strike the entire section.

Second: Councilor Mills

Vote – Unanimous in favor.

Amendment passed.

Vote on Order as Amended: 5 yeas – Councilors Belanger, Whiting, Emhiser, LaFountain and Schlaver.

2 nays – Councilors Lessard and Mills.

Motion passed.

January 16, 2024

Motion: Councilor Schlaver

Second: Councilor Whiting

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Attest by: _____
Robin Patterson, City Clerk



Diversity Calendar 2023

January

Poverty Awareness Month - a month-long initiative to raise awareness and call attention to the growth of poverty in America.

January 16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day: commemorates the life and work of Dr. King, who was a Baptist minister and prominent leader in the American civil rights movement. It is celebrated on the third Monday of January each year.

January 22 – Lunar New Year: this festival marks the start of the new year in the lunar calendar used in East Asia, Southeast Asia and elsewhere. It begins on the date of the second new Moon after the Winter Solstice, which means that the Lunar New Year can occur anytime between January 21 and February 20.

January 27 – International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust: a United Nations holiday that remembers the approximately 6 million Jews murdered during World War II.

February

Black History Month: February was chosen to celebrate African American History because it holds the birthdays of two men who helped eliminate slavery: Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln.

March

March 8 – International Women's Day: A day highlighting the political, social, cultural, and economic achievements of women

March 13-19 – Neurodiversity Celebration Week: a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about autism and learning disabilities.

March 17 – St. Patrick's Day: feast day of a Catholic saint who inspires cultural and religious celebrations around the world.

March 22 – Start of Ramadan: the start of Islam's sacred month — during this time Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until dusk. The beginning time of Ramadan is based on the first observance of the new Moon over Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

April

April 5 to April 13 – Passover: major Jewish festival that celebrates the freeing of Israeli slaves. The dates are based on the Hebrew calendar, from the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan through the 22nd day.

April 9 – Easter: major Christian holiday which celebrates Jesus' resurrection. Easter Sunday always occurs on the first Sunday following the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox.

April 21 – Eid al-Fitr: marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan. Eid is declared after a crescent new moon has been sighted or after completion of thirty days of fasting.

April 22 – Earth Day: holiday that applauds the planet we live on and all it does for us; Earth Day is observed by more than 192 nations.

May

Older Americans Month: celebrates how older Americans contribute to the United States

Jewish American Heritage Month: honors American Jews and their contributions to the United States throughout history.

Asian American and Pacific Island Heritage Month: commemorates people with Asian and Pacific Island ancestry and their contribution to the United States

June

LGBT Pride Month: Pride Month recognizes LGBT people and the effect they've had on the world. June was selected to commemorate the Stonewall Riots. Explore more with our LGBTQ inclusion training at the workplace.

Caribbean American Heritage Month: This month recognizes those of Caribbean descent and the impact their accomplishments have had throughout American history

June 19 – Juneteenth: This day commemorates when the last African Americans learned of the Emancipation Proclamation (over two years after it was originally issued)

June 21 – Summer Solstice: The summer solstice is the longest day of the year and the shortest night and has been celebrated by various cultures around the world for thousands of years.

July

July 26 – Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary: This law protects people with disabilities from being discriminated against.

August

August 1 – National Night Out: A community-police awareness-raising event in the United States, held the first Tuesday of August.

September

September 15 to October 15 – National Hispanic Heritage Month: This month honors Hispanic and Latino Americans for their contributions to U.S. culture.

National Recovery Month: This awareness month seeks to educate Americans on treatment and health services for individuals with substance use disorder.

September 10 – World Suicide Prevention Day: established in 2003 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention in conjunction with the World Health Organization to reduce stigma and raise awareness that suicide can be prevented.

September 15 to September 17 – Rosh Hashanah: This holiday is the Jewish New Year when Jews reflect on their faith. It occurs on the first two days of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar.

October

October 1-7 – Mental Illness Awareness Week: Each year, during the first week of October, participants across the country raise awareness of mental illness, fight discrimination and provide support for those living with a mental health condition.

October 9 – Indigenous People's Day: This day celebrates and honors the Indigenous People of North America and commemorates their histories and cultures.

October 11 – National Coming Out Day: Observed on the anniversary of the 1988 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, this annual awareness day supports LGBT people in 'coming out of the closet'.

November

Homelessness Awareness Month: This month serves to educate the public about the many reasons people are homeless, and to encourage support for homeless assistance service providers and other service organizations.

National Native American Heritage Month: This month celebrates the contributions — cultures, traditions, histories — of Native people to the United States.

November 12 – Diwali: An important celebration in the Hindu faith in which a variety of deities are praised. Diwali occurs annually during the Hindu month of Kartik on the day of the new Moon.

November 20 – Transgender Day of Remembrance: This day is held as a remembrance for all those murdered because of transphobia.

December

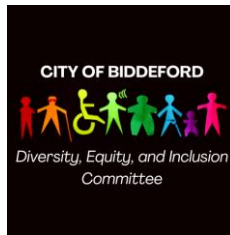
December 10 – International Humans Rights Day: A holiday adopted by the UN in 1948 following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

December 7 to December 15 – Hanukkah: A Jewish holiday celebrating Jew rising up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt. It begins on the 25th day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar.

December 21 – Winter Solstice/Yule: A festival celebrated by Pagan and Wiccan faiths.

December 25 – Christmas: A Christian holiday marking the birth of their lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

December 26 – Kwanzaa: An 8-day holiday often celebrated by Black Americans that was inspired by African harvest celebrations.



Diversity Calendar 2024

January

Poverty Awareness Month: A month-long initiative to raise awareness and call attention to the growth of poverty in America.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 15th): Commemorates the life and work of Dr. King, who was a Baptist minister and prominent leader in the American civil rights movement. It is celebrated on the third Monday of January each year.

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust (January 27th): A United Nations holiday that remembers the approximately 6 million Jews murdered during World War II.[1]

February

Black History Month: February was chosen to celebrate African American History because it holds the birthdays of two men who helped eliminate slavery: Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln.[2]

Lunar New Year (February 10th): Marks the start of the new year in the lunar calendar used in East Asia, Southeast Asia and elsewhere. It begins on the date of the second new Moon after the Winter Solstice, which means that the Lunar New Year can occur anytime between January 21 and February 20. 2024 is the year of the Dragon.[3]

March

International Women's Day (March 8th): A day highlighting the political, social, cultural, and economic achievements of women. | |
[4]

Start of Ramadan (March 10th): The start of Islam's most sacred month — during this time Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until dusk and also involves prayer, self-

reflection, and increased devotion. The beginning time of Ramadan is based on the first observance of the new Moon over Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week (March 18th - 24th): A worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences ~~while differences autism and learning disabilities~~ while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual.

St. Patrick's Day (March 17th): Feast day of a Catholic saint who inspires cultural and religious celebrations around the world[5].

Easter (March 30th): Major Christian holiday which celebrates Jesus' resurrection. Easter Sunday always occurs on the first Sunday following the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox.

April

Eid al-Fitr (April 9th): Marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan (the Holiday of Breaking the Fast). Eid is declared after a crescent new moon has been sighted or after completion of thirty days of fasting.

Passover (April 22nd - April 30th): Major Jewish festival that celebrates the freeing of enslaved Israelites-slaves from Egypt. The dates are based on the Hebrew calendar, from the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan through the 22nd day.

Earth Day (April 22nd): A ~~holiday that~~ applauds the planet we live on and all it does for us; Earth Day is observed by more than 192 nations. Earth Day 2024 is unwavering in its commitment to end plastics for the sake of human and planetary health, demanding a 60% reduction in the production of ALL plastics by 2040.

May

Older Americans Month: Celebrates how older Americans contribute to the United States.

Jewish American Heritage Month: Honors American Jews and their contributions to the United States throughout history.

Asian American and Pacific Island Heritage Month: ~~Celebrates~~ ~~commemorates~~ people with Asian and Pacific Island ancestry and their contributions to the United States.

June

LGBT Pride Month: Recognizes LGBTQ+ people and the effect they've had on the world. June was selected to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, which were sparked by a police raid on a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York City. This event was a pivotal moment in the LGBTQ+ rights movement and has been seen as the beginning of the fight for equal rights. Explore more with our LGBTQ+ inclusion training at the workplace. [6]

Caribbean American Heritage Month: Recognizes those of Caribbean descent and the impact their accomplishments have had throughout American history[7].

Juneteenth (June 19th): Commemorates when the last 250,000 enslaved African Americans learned of the Emancipation Proclamation (over two years after it was originally issued). They were then finally declared 'free.'

Summer Solstice (June 20th): The longest day of the year and the shortest night and has been celebrated by various cultures around the world for thousands of years.

July

Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary (July 26th): This landmark law affirmed the inherent dignity of every person, regardless of disability~~protects people with disabilities from being discriminated against.~~ | |

[8]

Muharram (beginning July 7th): This is the first month of the Islamic calendar and one of the four sacred months of the year when warfare is banned. It includes the day of Ashura, which is of religious significance for Shia Muslims.

August

National Night Out (August 6th): A community-police and safety awareness-raising event in the United States, held the first Tuesday of August.

September

National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th - October 15th): Honors Hispanic and Latino Americans for their achievements and contributions to United States culture.

National Recovery Month: Seeks to raise awareness and educate Americans on treatment and health services for individuals struggling with addiction, and to exemplify that recovery is possible~~substance use disorder~~.

World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10th): Established in 2003 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention in conjunction with the World Health Organization, to reduce the stigma and raise awareness that suicide can be prevented.

October

Rosh Hashanah (October 2nd - 4th): The Jewish New Year when Jews reflect on their faith. It occurs on the first two days of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar.

Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 6th - 12th): Each year, during the first week of October, participants across the country raise awareness of mental illness, fight discrimination and provide support for those living with mental health conditions.

National Coming Out Day (October 11th): Observed on the anniversary of the 1988 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, this international annual awareness day supports LGBT Q+ people in 'coming out of the closet.'

Indigenous People's Day (October 14th): Celebrates and honors all Indigenous People of North America and commemorates their histories and cultures.

November

Homelessness Awareness Month: Serves to educate the public about the many reasons people are unhoused~~homeless~~, and to encourage support for ~~homeless~~ assistance service providers and other service organizations aiming to offer a variety of resources to the unhoused population.

National Native American Heritage Month: Calls attention to the culture, traditions, and achievements of the nation's original inhabitants and of their descendants~~celebrates the contributions — cultures, traditions, histories — of Native people to the United States~~.

Diwali (November 1st): An important celebration in the Hindu faith in which a variety of deities are praised. Diwali occurs annually during the Hindu month of Kartik on the day of the new Moon.

Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20th): Held as a remembrance for all those murdered as a result of transphobia.

December

International Humans Rights Day (December 10th): Adopted by the UN in 1948 following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Winter Solstice/Yule (December 21st): The shortest day of the year and the longest night, and a festival celebrated by those of the Pagan and Wiccan faiths.

Christmas (December 25th): A Christian holiday marking the birth of their Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

Hanukkah (December 25th - January 3rd): A Jewish holiday celebrating Jew rising up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt. It begins on the 25th day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar.

Kwanzaa (December 26th - January 1st): ~~An 8-day holiday~~ Annual celebration of African American heritage, unity, and culture, often celebrated by Black Americans and is that was inspired by African harvest celebrations.

City of Biddeford



PROCLAMATION

Whereas, Eid al-Fitr is a celebration which holds profound significance within the Islamic faith, commemorating the conclusion of Ramadan, a sacred month of fasting, prayer, and spiritual reflection; and,

Whereas, Muslims worldwide gather in unity during Eid al-Fitr to rejoice in the blessings from the month of Ramadan bestowed upon them, due to their steadfastness, faith, and devotion, demonstrated throughout this holy month; and,

Whereas, Eid al-Fitr is a time for Muslims to come together with family, friends, and neighbors to share meals, exchange gifts, and extend acts of charity and goodwill; and

Whereas, the values of compassion, generosity, and community, emphasized during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, resonate with the principles upon which the City of Biddeford stands; and

Whereas, the celebration of Eid al-Fitr enriches the cultural mosaic of the City, offering an opportunity for residents to embrace the values of empathy, generosity, and solidarity espoused by the Islamic tradition and to celebrate alongside our Muslim neighbors;

Therefore, I, Martin Grohman, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, do hereby honor that April 9th, 2024, was Eid-Al-Fitr in our City. May this proclamation serve as a testament to our unwavering commitment to inclusivity, respect, and mutual appreciation for the religious and cultural heritage that enriches our collective identities.