

City of Biddeford
City Council
May 6, 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

Item 11.c will be moved to the 5-20-25 agenda.

Item 11.m. will be moved to the 5-8-25 agenda.

4. Public Hearing

4.a Public Hearing City Budget

The public hearing was opened at 6:21 pm.

Two citizens spoke in support of the library budget.

One citizen spoke about the holiday lighting budget.

One citizen spoke about the community gardens program.

One citizen spoke about the overall budget and requested reductions.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:34 pm.

5. Recognition

5.a Mayor Recognition Peter Bickford

Mayor Grohman spoke about Peter Bickford's retirement from the Biddeford Post Office.

6. Proclamation

6.a National Police Week 2025

6.b 2025 National Bike Month

Mayor Grohman read the proclamations.

7. Appointments

7.a 2025.36 Approval Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Belanger

Councilor Lessard asked for the pronouns on the application to be listed as optional.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7.b 2025.62 Approval Mayoral Council Committee Appointment

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

8. Presentation

8.a Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Program update

Jessica Wilson, Community Development & Grants Manager, gave an update on the 2019 and 2022 lead grant programs.

9. Public Addressing the Council

One person spoke in favor of the library, community gardens and school budget items.

One person praised the outstanding job that Public Works, the Police and Fire Departments, are doing to manage the Elm Street construction project.

10. Consideration of Minutes

10.a Council Minutes 4-15-25

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

10.b Special Council Meeting Minutes 4-22-25

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11. Orders of the Day

11.a 2025.39 Approval PW Pick Up

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard.

Councilor LaFountain commented that this item passed unanimously in the Finance Committee meeting.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.b 2025.41 Approval Monarch Pledge and No Mow May

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

Holly Culloton, Director of Biddeford Community Gardens gave an update on the Spring Pollinator Festival happening on Saturday, May 31st from noon – 4:00 pm at Rotary Park.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.c 2025.43 Approval DEP Consent Agreement - item moved to the 5-20-25 Council Agenda

11.d 2025.60 Approval Maine Water Quarterly Billing

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Public comment – one citizen asked about the cost savings.

Councilor LaFountain requested that information be provided to customers before the change.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.e 2025.61 Approval Ordinance Change Use of Jake Brake Prohibited

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor Lessard asked about the enforcement of the current ordinance.

Councilor Beaupre said this came from the Traffic Committee and there were several citizen complaints.

Police Chief JoAnne Fisk spoke about enforcement. The proposed language is comparable to surrounding communities. Signs would be placed at the entrances to the city. Initial stops would create an opportunity for education.

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

1 nay – Councilor Lessard.

Motion passed.

11.f 2025.44 Approval City Government Appropriations FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Public Comment – one citizen asked about the contingency fund.

The councilors discussed the fund and the affordable housing fund.

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

1 nay – Councilor Lessard.

Motion passed.

11.g 2025.45 Approval Revenues City FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

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

1 nay – Councilor Lessard.

Motion passed.

11.h 2025.46 Approval Airport Operations Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: 7 yeas – Councilors Ortiz, Belanger, Gross, Doughty, Beaupre, Emhiser and Lessard.

1 nay – Councilor LaFountain.

Motion passed.

11.i 2025.47 Approval Ambulance Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

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

1 nay – Councilor Lessard.

Motion passed.

11.j 2025.48 Approval Mooring Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor Emhiser explained that this fund is now in balance.

Councilor LaFountain commented that it no longer needs \$15,000 from the general fund.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.k 2025.49 Approval Pool Beach Permit Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Public Comment – one citizen commented that the fund should balance.

Councilor LaFountain spoke about the fee increases several years ago and the services that the fund covers.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.l 2025.50 Approval Recreation Programs Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.m 2025.51 Approval Sewer Operations FY26 - moved to the 5-8-25 Council agenda.

11.n 2025.52 Approval Property Tax Dates and Interest FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Belanger

Councilor Lessard – motion to amend to change the date from November 1, 2025 to October 15, 2025.

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote on the amendment: Unanimous in favor.

Amendment passed.

Vote on the order as amended: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.o 2025.53 Approval School Essential Programs and Services FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Superintendent Jeremy Ray gave an update on the school budget and the recent reductions.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.p 2025.54 Approval School Construction Projects FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.q 2025.55 Approval School Additional Funds Raised FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Public Comment – one citizen asked about the additional funds.

Superintendent Ray explained the funding formula.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.r 2025.56 Approval School Appropriations FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.s 2025.57 Approval School Adult Education FY26

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.t 2025.58 Approval School Food Service FY26

Motion: Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor LaFountain asked about the total cost.

Superintendent Ray explained that the number of meals has increased as well as the cost of food.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

12. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen commented that they appreciated the hard work on the budget and there is still time to adjust it before Thursday.

13. City Manager Report

Acting City Manager Brian Phinney gave an update on the FY23 and FY24 audits and also on the Elm Street project.

Councilor Lessard requested a fund balance update.

Councilor LaFountain asked for a follow-up with the Laconia Street no trespassing signs and the details of the easement.

14. Committee Updates by Council

Councilor Beaupre said the Veterans Committee meeting has been moved from Memorial Day to 5-19-25.

15. Other Business

Councilor Beaupre asked the Personnel Committee to review the City Hall hours. Councilor Emhiser said it will be added to the next agenda.

Councilor Beaupre asked about Executive Sessions during committee meetings. City Solicitor Harry Center explained that only committee members can be present for the executive sessions.

Councilor Lessard will be attending the York County Budget meeting tomorrow in Alfred.

16. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain said that the Capital Projects committee has started touring all of the city owned buildings and they will have recommendations for the Council in June.

He also thanked everyone involved in the Earth Day clean up activities and the Biddeford Hall of Honor event.

17. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman congratulated everyone involved with the Music Hall of Fame. He mentioned the Biddeford Rising event next week. He recently toured the York County training facility. He is working with the housing huddle and local businesses to come up with a summer stipend work program. He mentioned the parking report.

18. Executive Session

18.a Executive Session 1 MRS 405 (6) a Personnel Matters

Councilor Belanger - motion to enter executive session at 8:14 pm

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Councilor Emhiser - motion to exit executive session at 8:56 pm

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

19. Adjourn

Motion: Councilor Emhiser at 8:56 pm

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned.