

City of Biddeford
Special City Council Meeting
May 8, 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 - present
Councilor Beaupre - via zoom
Councilor Gross - present
Councilor Belanger - present
Councilor Doughty - excused

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adjustment(s) to Agenda

Item 5.a. 2025.51 will move to the 5-20-25 Council agenda

Item 6.a. Executive Session is cancelled.

4. Second Reading

4.a 2025.44 Approval City Government Appropriations FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Whiting

Public Comment – one citizen suggested several scenarios to reduce the budget.

Councilor Belanger – motion to suspend the council rules to allow the citizen to speak longer.

Second: Councilor LaFountain.

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

Public comment – one person spoke in favor of the library request.

Councilor Belanger: motion to amend to fully fund 6 of the vacant Police Department positions and half fund 2 of the vacant positions until January 2026.

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Police Chief JoAnn Fisk spoke about these positions and recruitment efforts.

Councilors spoke about the challenges; public safety is a priority and voiced concerns about potential changes in the new year.

Vote on the amendment: 2 yeas – Councilors Belanger and Emhiser
5 nays – Councilors Ortiz, Gross, Whiting, LaFountain; Councilor Beaupre nay via zoom.
Amendment failed.

Councilor Beaupre – motion to reduce the Public Access position budget by \$85,393.
Second: Councilor Belanger

Councilor LaFountain said there would be a process with the City Manager and staff to make this change.

Acting City Manager Brian Phinney spoke about the potential timeline.

Vote on the amendment: 5 yeas – Councilors Belanger, Gross, Whiting, Emhiser; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.
3 nays – Councilors LaFountain, Ortiz and Lessard.
Amendment passed.

Councilor Belanger – motion to reduce the Contingency Fund by \$200,000.
Second: Councilor Beaupre

Mayor Grohman spoke about an alternative funding source.

Councilor Lessard – motion to reduce the Municipal Services budget by \$200,000, keep the Contingency Fund at \$700,000 and back fill Services if funds come in.
Second – Councilor Ortiz.

Councilor Whiting – Point of Order, is it allowed to have a motion to a motion? The response was yes.

Vote on the amendment – 3 yeas – Councilors Lessard, Gross; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.
5 nays – Councilors Ortiz, Belanger, Whiting, Emhiser and LaFountain.
Amendment failed.

Vote on the previous amendment to reduce the contingency fund- unanimous against.
Amendment failed.

Vote on the order as amended: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.
Motion passed.

4.b 2025.45 Approval Revenues City FY26
Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.c 2025.46 Approval Airport Operations Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: 6 yeas – Councilors Ortiz, Belanger, Gross, Whiting and Emhiser; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

2 nays – Councilors Lessard and LaFountain.

Motion passed.

4.d 2025.47 Approval Ambulance Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Fire Chief Best explained the billing process and the bad debt portion. Our percentage of collections is better than the average.

Councilor Emhiser explained the insurance billing process.

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.e 2025.48 Approval Mooring Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.f 2025.49 Approval Pool Beach Permit Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Public Comment – one citizen commented about the fund balance and fees.

Councilor Belanger suggested that they look at this in the fall to make any fee adjustments before the season starts.

Vote: 7 yeas – Councilors Ortiz, Belanger, Gross, Whiting, Emhiser, LaFountain; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

1 nay – Councilor Lessard.

Motion passed.

4.g 2025.50 Approval Recreation Programs Fund FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.h 2025.52 Approval Property Tax Dates and Interest FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.i 2025.53 Approval School Essential Programs and Services FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.j 2025.54 Approval School Construction Projects FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Public comment – one citizen asked about savings from closing the JFK building. Superintendent Jeremy Ray explained that those are already in the budget.

Councilor Lessard requested a chart of the bonds and payoff timelines and suggested that they use that to consider the timing of future projects.

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.k 2025.55 Approval School Additional Funds Raised FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.l 2025.56 Approval School Appropriations FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.m 2025.57 Approval School Adult Education FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

4.n 2025.58 Approval School Food Service FY26

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor; Councilor Beaupre yea via zoom.

Motion passed.

5. Orders of the Day

5.a 2025.51 Approval Sewer Operations FY26

Moved to 5-20-25 Council meeting

6. Executive Session

a. Executive Session - 1 MRS 405 (6) e - Legal Matters - cancelled

7. Adjourn

Motion: Councilor Belanger at 7:29 pm

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned