

City of Biddeford
City Council
October 15, 2024 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

The City Clerk provided an update on early absentee voting. Early voting activities are available on the second floor, all polling place laws are in effect. Over 3,000 absentee ballots have been mailed/issued in the first week. Absentee ballots are available until October 31st. Voter Registration numbers are very high, very early as reported in the press recently. Voter Registration is available in person during normal office hours, also from 6 pm to 8 pm on Wednesday, October 30th and on election day. Election day is Tuesday, November 5th from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm at Tiger Gym, Biddeford High School.

4. Games of Chance

4.a Games of Chance application York County Veteran's Alliance

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

5. Appointments

5.a 2024.165 Approval Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

6. Presentation

6.a Biddeford Fire Advisory Committee-PRESENTATION

An update on the committee was provided by Fire Chief Best and Mr. Pendleton

7. Public Addressing the Council

1 spoke about housing.

1 gave an update on downtown businesses, another spoke about the business climate.

2 spoke in support of keeping the town landing.

1 spoke in favor of the new playground and would like an update on the skatepark.

8. Consideration of Minutes

8.a City Council Minutes 10-1-24

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Minutes approved.

9. Orders of the Day

9.a 2024.166 Approval/Purchase EMS Defibrillator Units

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor LaFountain stated that this item was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.b 2024.168 Approval Amendment Back Lot Ordinance

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

City Planner David Galbraith explained that this fixes a loophole in the original language.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.c 2024.169 Approval Text Amendment Marijuana Establishments

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

Several councilors asked questions about the changes.

City Planner Galbraith reviewed the changes. This was reviewed again due to complaints about odor.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.d 2024.170 Approval Amend Ordinance Inclusionary Zone

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor LaFountain suggested this be reviewed again with the language changes approved in August of this year.

Councilor LaFountain – motion to table until the next meeting

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote – Unanimous in favor.

Item tabled.

9.e 2024.171 Approval Amend Table B Dimensional Requirements

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

Economic Development Director George Gervais explained that this corrects some discrepancies from the November 2023 ordinance.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed

9.f 2024.172 Approval Installation of Fire Service Water Line & Separated Storm Sewer

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Lessard

COO Brian Phinney explained that this will allow provide savings by combining this with other water line work.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.g 2024.173 Approval City Hall Renovation Project - Interior Window Trim

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor Beaupre – motion to amend to change source of funding to City Hall Renovation Project.

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Vote on the amendment: Unanimous in favor.

Amendment passed.

Vote on the order as amended: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9.h 2024.174 Approval Condominium Conversions Emergency Moratorium

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

Public Comment –

3 people spoke in favor of the proposed condominium plan.

5 people spoke in favor of the moratorium.

Councilor Belanger cannot support the moratorium; it is not an emergency in his opinion.

Councilors LaFountain, Ortiz and Doughty expressed support for the moratorium and the current housing crisis is an emergency.

Councilor Gross would like to have the information sooner, especially if it is in her ward.

Councilors Emhiser and Belanger would like a workshop on this topic.

Vote: 6 yeas – Councilors Ortiz, Gross, Doughty, Beaupre, Emhiser and LaFountain.

2 nays – Councilors Lessard and Belanger.

Motion passed.

9.i 2024.175 Approval Tax Payment Interest Deadline Extension

Motion: Councilor Lafountain

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

10. Public Addressing the Council

3 people spoke about taxes, budgets and financial issues.

11. City Manager Report

Jess Wilson will be taking over the responsibilities for the Lead Housing Program.

City Manager Jim Bennett announced his plans to retire in April 2025.

12. Other Business

13. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain congratulated City Manager Bennett on his retirement plans. He would like to see more communication to the public about property assessments.

14. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman thanked City Manager Bennett for his years of service.

Save the date: the grand opening of the addition to the Center of Technology at Biddeford High School is Tuesday, October 29th at 9:30 am.

15. Executive Session

15.a Executive Session MRS 405 (6) c Real Estate Matters

15.b Executive Session MRS 405 (6) e Legal Matters

15.c Executive Session MRS 405 (6) a Personnel Matters

Councilor Belanger – motion to go into executive session for real estate matters and legal matters at 7:59 pm.

Second: Councilor Lessard.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Councilor Belanger motion to come out of executive session at: 8:59 pm

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

16. Adjourn

Councilor Belanger – motion to adjourn at 8:59 pm

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned.