

City of Biddeford
City Council
October 1, 2024 at 6:00 PM

1. Roll Call

Council President LaFountain - present
Councilor Lessard - excused
Councilor Ortiz - present
Councilor Emhiser - present
Councilor Whiting - present
Councilor Beaupre - present
Councilor Gross - present
Councilor Belanger -present
Councilor Doughty - present

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adjustment(s) to Agenda - none

4. Appointments

4.a 2024.158 Approval/Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Whiting

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed

5. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen spoke about the importance of keeping access to the town landing.

6. Consideration of Minutes

6.a Council Minutes 9-17-24

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Whiting

Adjustments: the Mayor's comments should reflect 12 straight years of school growth.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7. Orders of the Day

7.a 2024.157 Approval/Purchase Replacement Waste Truck

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Public Works Director Jeff Demers explained the incident and the replacement process.

Councilor Emhiser asked if the wiring was a manufacturing defect. PW Director Demers said that meetings with the manufacturer will be the next step.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7.b 2024.159 Approval/Purchase one 2024 Dodge Durango Pursuit SUV/AWD police vehicle

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Chief of Police JoAnne Fisk explained the replacement cycle for the vehicles and that this one would be kept for occasional use.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7.c 2024.160 Acceptance of 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Gross

Chief Fisk explained the grant process and the items it is intended for.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

*7.d 2024.161 Approval/Correction of FY 25 School Budget Construction Debt Service
order 2024.79*

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Whiting

This is a correction and does not need a second reading.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7.e 2024.163 Approval/Reschedule Council Meeting 11-5-24

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7.f 2024.162 Approval/City Hall Renovation Project - Window Limiters

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7.g 2024.164 Approval/Renovation Project - Tower Windows

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Councilor Belanger is in favor of the item, it is important to keep the historical details.

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

1 nay – Councilor Whiting.

Motion passed.

8. Committee of the Whole

8.a Housing and Unhoused Updates and Discussion

Motion to go into Committee of the Whole by Councilor Beaupre at 6:29 pm

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

General Assistance Director Jake Hammer gave an update on how the program is working so far. There have been gains with placing people. He provided examples of the types of placements. The GA reimbursement paperwork is on track and functioning as it is supposed to. They have built relationships with local landlords and area agencies.

Councilor Ortiz requested more detail on the numbers, where they are going, how many are still outside, etc.

Economic Development Director George Gervais gave an update on several of the 17 projects that were reviewed in August. The Maine State Housing submissions are in, there should be news in a few months.

Council ideas for the future:

Councilor Belanger asked for an update on the Comprehensive Plan, asked for a look at the overall zoning system. He would like the City to work on ideas to develop housing at the next level, when first time home owners are ready to move up. He also commented of planning for a walkable City, including grocery stores.

Councilor Emhiser – the Council visited Houston Commons in Portland. It would be good to develop one here in the next few years. He also discussed the importance of green space in our planning. He asked about the progress with the River walk.

Councilor Doughty mentioned that one of the challenges is finding shelter for couples.

Councilor LaFountain agreed with the comments about green space. He asked for an update on City owned properties and their potential. He would Planning to look at the land around the airport.

Councilor Ortiz discussed the importance of beautification and public art. There are discussions about this right now in the Policy Committee.

Mayor Grohman shared information about the solar developments in Sanford. He also complimented the vision of the Council in the 1950s for their efforts to create the industrial parks. Access to power, water and sewer can make the difference to a development project.

City Manager Jim Bennett reviewed some of the changes in the demographics of the City and asked Council to develop a list of the top 2-3 things for staff to focus on.

Motion to come out of Committee of the Whole at 7:42 pm by Councilor Whiting

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9. Public Addressing the Council

none

10. City Manager Report

City Manager Bennett updated the Council on the Hills Beach Association Fire Station progress.

The Bond Anticipation Note for the School Construction was opened this week.

He mentioned that October is extremely busy for customer service with absentee ballots, tax bills and sewer bills. People can avoid the line by using online services and mailing in payments. Information is available on the City's website.

Tax bills were delayed to add more value and keep the mil rate at the original amount of 14.22.

Sewer bills are being finalized for the past six months and will have information coming soon for customer questions and payments. The website is the best resource to send in meter readings.

The FY23 audit should be ready in early 2025.

11. Other Business

None.

12. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain said that there would be an executive session after the Mayor's comments.

13. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman played in the Recovery Softball game this week, he shared details on how the event has grown.

Next week the Chamber is having a Ten Talks event.

School news – the Tech Center will have a grand opening soon. He thanked Pierson's Nursery for donating plants for landscaping.

Councilor LaFountain – motion to go into Executive Session at 7:56 pm for 1 MRS 405 6 c Personnel Matters.

Second: Councilor Whiting

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Councilor LaFountain – motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:58 pm

Second: Councilor Whiting

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

14. Adjourn

Councilor LaFountain – motion to adjourn at 8:58 pm

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned.