



City of Biddeford
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

September 8, 2025 at 5:30 PM
City Hall Second Floor Conference Room & Zoom

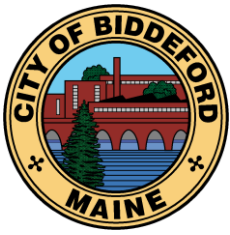
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Meeting ID: 960 8525 5788

Passcode: 905444

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3 Minute Limit Per Speaker
3. Approval of Minutes
3.a August 11 2025 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Discussion Items
4.a Strategic Planning 2026
 - River Jam reflections
 - Volunteering expectations for 2026
 - Full 2026 proclamation list
4.b Approval for Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation
4.c New committee members in 2026
4.d What's next with public bathrooms?
5. Other Business
6. 2nd Public Comment
7. Adjourn



CITY OF BIDDEFORD

205 Main St.
P.O. Box 586
Biddeford, Maine 04005

DEI COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES August 11, 2025

Status

1. Called to order by the Chair at 5:36 PM.

Present: Shelly Gibson, Danica Lamontagne, Flo Leighton, Bistra Nikiforova, Scott Whiting, Anne Morrissey, Maura Oakes

Via Zoom: Ariane Meno Kobo

Absent: Breese Reagle, Syed Zafar

2. Public Comment (3-minute limit per speaker)

No one from the public was present to comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.a July 14 2025 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes

Scott made a motion to approve the minutes; Maura seconded the motion; the motion passes unanimously.

4. Discussion Items

- 4.a Upcoming Biddeford Beat & Proclamations (write-ups)

Shelly met with Britt LaShier who is the Opioid Outreach Coordinator for the City, and she is interested in coming to a future meeting to share more about her work and collaborating on an event/write-up for Suicide Prevention Week or National Recovery month. Anne also suggested the committee include a write-up in the Beat about this partnership to show some of the work being done to education and engage with our community members in the City.

September is Hispanic Heritage month: Scott will work on a proclamation draft with Shelly and Anne, to be approved by the committee at the 9/8 meeting and read at the Council meeting on 9/16. Shelly will also aim to get a list of local businesses that are Hispanic/Latinx owned in the City. Flo offered to write something for the Jewish High Holy days (Rosh Hashanah - 9/22, and Yom Kippur – 10/1). Bistra will write something for the Biddeford Beat regarding Suicide Prevention Week, for the 9/5 edition. Bistra will write something combining the previous proclamation and Beat write-up, for 9/5 edition. For National Recovery month, Shelly will work with Britt & Shannon (City staff) and submit the final draft to Danica for the Beat.

- 4.b River Jam

Maura agreed to share details of the event (parking, maps, etc.) with the rest of the committee in the hope that anyone else can help with set up and shifts. HoB is expecting folks to be there the full time from 12pm – 4pm (arrive between 10am-11am). If no one else from the committee can help Maura, there may be an option to join another City sponsored table.

4.c Public Bathroom Survey (continued)

The committee agreed to draft an initial survey that is very short and can be given to attendees at River Jam this weekend. Those questions are:

- Where have you been in Biddeford where you could NOT access a public bathroom?
- What types of resources would you like a public bathroom to include? (with check box options)
- Do you live in Biddeford/are you a visitor?

For the next iteration of the survey/data collection, the group agreed to keep it somewhat brief to engage the most people, and to prioritize these additional components/questions:

- Define what we mean by public bathroom and show a map of those we've identified as public.
- Think about what the end goal/what information do we want to gather.
- Consider a separate survey for business owners that could be more in depth.

Before adjourning, the committee discussed the City email/personal email option (with an August 29th deadline) and changed October's meeting date to 10/6 given the overlap with Indigenous Peoples' Day.

5. 2nd Public Comment (3-minute limit per speaker)

No one from the public was present to comment.

6. Meeting Adjourned at 6:50PM.

WHEREAS, from September 15 to October 15, we observe Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to acknowledge the emerging influence of the Hispanic community in our City and to celebrate their cultural contributions; and

WHEREAS, the growth of the Hispanic community within our City presents a valuable opportunity to learn from new perspectives, embrace diverse experiences, and forge connections that enrich the collective tapestry of our City; and

WHEREAS, as our community welcomes and integrates members of the Hispanic community, it is essential to cultivate an atmosphere of inclusion; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging the challenges that the Hispanic community faces today, it is our shared responsibility to ensure that acting upon bias, discrimination, and stereotypes has no place within our City, as we endeavor to create an environment of equity and acceptance; and

WHEREAS, the support we extend to our Hispanic neighbors is more than symbolic; our patronage at businesses such as 77 Convenience Store, Coco's, Woodgrain Barbers, and Edelweiss is a commitment to an environment where everyone, regardless of background, can thrive and contribute to the shared prosperity of our city.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Martin Grohman, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, on behalf of the City Council and the residents of Biddeford, do hereby proclaim the observance of Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, 2025.