



**City of Biddeford**  
**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**

October 6, 2025 at 5:30 PM  
City Hall Second Floor Conference Room & Zoom

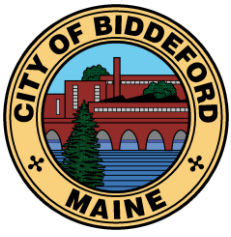
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Meeting ID: 998 0767 7564

Passcode: 217225

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment  
3 Minute Limit Per Speaker
3. Approval of Minutes  
3.a September 8 2025 Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Discussion Items  
4.a Homelessness Awareness Month Proclamation 2025  
4.b Committee Plans for 2026
  - Member volunteer expectations (for events)
  - 2026 proclamations  
4.c Public Bathrooms
  - Survey feedback from River Jam
  - Survey questions for the community
5. Other Business  
5.a Roles in 2026 (Vice Chair)  
December Holidays Proclamation (volunteer)
6. Second Public Comment (DEI Committee)  
3 Minute Limit Per Speaker
7. Adjourn



# CITY OF BIDDEFORD

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

## DEI COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES September 8, 2025

### Status

1. Called to order by the Chair at 5:37 PM.

Present: Shelly Gibson, Flo Leighton, Bistra Nikiforova, Scott Whiting, Anne Morrissey, Breese Reagle

Absent: Danica Lamontagne, Syed Zafar, Maura Oakes, Ariane Meno Kobo

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

No one from the public was present to comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

- 3.a August 11 2025 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes

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

4. Discussion Items

- 4.a Strategic Planning 2026

- River Jam reflections: Maura shared prior to the meeting that while it's an amazing event, the committee may not have capacity to staff a table. Handing out pamphlets, walking around, being present, all are great options instead of a table. Danica and Bistra both shared that the layout was a challenge for non-profits and organizations, based on their distance from the vendors (and that seemed to draw the most interest and engagement from attendees). They did receive a couple of survey responses about public bathrooms.

The lack of coverage has happened in previous years, so the committee discussed options for incentivizing volunteering for members, showing up and mingling with community members instead of being stationed in one spot at an event, and being mindful of how public-facing events may not be suitable for all committee members based on their own comfort/safety. The question was posed to think about: what events are essential for the committee to take part in?

Shelly & Danica will try to get the survey results from River Jam (from Maura).

- Volunteering expectations for 2026: Should there be a requirement for volunteer hours? Can the committee decide based on their need and

availability and what feels accessible to the public and people's capacity? Trunk or Treat, for example, could be a fun way to engage and be present. It is also worth reviewing the attendance policy for the committee at the next meeting, to be sure everyone is on the same page for showing up to monthly meetings.

- Full 2026 proclamation list: the timeline for submitting items for Council agendas is going to be 13-14 days prior to the meeting, which will likely impact some of the committees' drafts and approvals they submit to the Mayor. Shelly M. has asked that the group create a list of proclamations they want to submit for 2026 and share it with her, so she can have a comprehensive list for City leadership. Shelly G. will start to work on this with her, and then the committee will revisit the 2026 Diversity calendar at the October meeting to ensure it aligns with their expectations.

The committee agreed that Pride, Juneteenth, Black History Month, and Eid are all ones they'd like to invest time in (to attend and write about).

#### 4.b Approval for Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation

Breese made a motion to approve the proclamation; Anne seconded the motion; the motion passes unanimously.

#### 4.c New committee members in 2026

At the end of 2025, there will be 2 open seats on the committee (unless either current member renews), in addition to the current vacancy. Please share this info with your networks and encourage them to apply online!

#### 4.d What's next with public bathrooms?

Flo shared an inquiry/request she received from the Mayor about the committee's current and future work with public bathrooms. The Mayor seemed very interested in moving the public bathroom discussion and initiative forward and encouraged Flo and the committee to consider bringing any recommendations/proposals to the Council soon.

The committee discussed this request and agreed they were very glad to have the Mayors support, and that data collection from local businesses, community members, non-profits (in addition to any other stakeholders) has not really been collected yet. The committee also agreed that they would be interested to see any research the Mayor already had about how this has worked elsewhere, what barriers exist, etc., to add to the information they are planning to put together in this long-term process and project.

### 5. Other Business

Flo will do a write up for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to submit to Danica for the Biddeford Beat.

Shelly G. and Shelly M. will work on an Indigenous Peoples' Day proclamation given the committee's next meeting will not allow enough time to review, vote, and submit to Council with the amended timeline, before the holiday.

Bistra will work on a proclamation for Homelessness Awareness Week, to be reviewed and approved in the October meeting (and read at Council in November).

6. 2nd Public Comment (3-minute limit per speaker)

No one from the public was present to comment.

7. Meeting Adjourned at 6:42PM.

## Proclamation for Homelessness Month

WHEREAS, safe and stable housing is a basic human need and essential to the health, dignity, and well-being of every individual and family; and

WHEREAS, far too many people in our community, including children, youth, families, veterans, and seniors, continue to experience homelessness or housing insecurity; and

WHEREAS, homelessness is often caused by complex factors such as lack of affordable housing, unemployment, poverty, mental health challenges, and substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, individuals experiencing homelessness demonstrate strength, resilience, and the desire for stability when given the right supports and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, our community is strengthened when we come together to support organizations such as Seeds of Hope, agencies, and individuals who work tirelessly to provide shelter, services, and pathways to permanent housing for those in need; and

WHEREAS, Homelessness Awareness Month provides an opportunity to educate the public, challenge misconceptions, and inspire action to create solutions that ensure everyone has a place to call home; and

WHEREAS, ending homelessness requires compassion, commitment, and collaboration across all sectors of society, including government, nonprofits, faith communities, businesses, and residents;

THEREFORE, I, Martin Grohman, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, do hereby proclaim the month of **November as Homelessness Awareness Month** in Biddeford, and encourage all residents to recognize the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness, to support local efforts that provide shelter and services, and to work together toward the vision of a community where no one is without a safe and stable home.