

Biddeford City Council
November 7, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Mayor Grohman called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Councilors LaFountain, Lessard, Ortiz, Whiting, Beaupre, Gross and Belanger were present. Councilors Emhiser and Doughty were excused.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Grohman led the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

3. Adjustment(s) to Agenda

Mayor Grohman removed agenda item 11A and agenda item 17 from the agenda.

4. Proclamation

4.a. 2024 Extra Mile Day

Mayor Grohman read the 2024 Extra Mile Day Proclamation into the record.

4.b. 2024 Veterans Day Proclamation

Mayor Grohman read the 2024 Veterans Day Proclamation into the record.

5. Public Hearing(s)

5.a. Public Hearing General Assistance

Mayor Grohman opened the public hearing on the updated general assistance maximums for fiscal year 2025 (FY25) at 6:06 P.M. There were no public comments. The hearing was closed at 6:07 P.M.

6. Appointments

6.a. 2024.176 Approval/Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.

Second by Councilor Belanger.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen voiced concerns and displeasure with his 26.5% real estate tax increase over last year.

8. Games of Change

8.a Games of Change Application Amvets

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.

Second by Councilor Belanger.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9. Consideration of Minutes

9.a Council Minutes 10-15-2024 and 11-01-2024

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.
Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote: Unanimous in favor.
Motion passed.

10. Second Reading

10.a 2024.168 Approval Amendment Back Lot Ordinance

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.
Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote: Unanimous in favor.
Motion passed.

10.b 2024.169 Approval Text Amendment Marijuana Establishments

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.
Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote: 6 yeas – Councilors LaFountain, Ortiz, Whiting, Beaupre, Gross and Belanger
1 nay – Councilor Lessard.
Motion passed.

10.c 2024.171 Approval Amend Table B Dimensional Requirements

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.
Second by Councilor Belanger.

Motion to amend by Councilor Lessard. Notes/Table B (items not allowed), add “#4. Egress stairs may be constructed within side and rear setbacks to a setback line equal to four feet less than the existing allowable setback but at no time may the setback be less than zero feet.”

Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote on amendment: Unanimous in favor.
Amendment passed.

Motion to amend by Councilor Ortiz. D.1.i. “For Rental Housing, occupancy of all the units designated affordable in the development will remain limited to households at or below ~~80%~~ **70%** of the local area median income at the time of initial occupancy”

Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote on amendment: 1 yea – Councilor Ortiz
6 nays – Councilors LaFountain, Lessard, Whiting, Beaupre, Gross and Belanger
Amendment failed.

Vote on motion as amended: Unanimous in favor.
Motion passed.

11. Orders of the Day

11.a Remove from Table 2024.170 Approval Amend Ordinance Inclusionary Zone

This item was removed from the agenda.

11.b 2024.177 Approval/General Assistance Maximums Ordinance

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.

Second by Councilor Belanger.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Council President LaFountain supported the increases and market survey in 2025 to better align the rates to actual costs. He also suggested that general assistance eligibility guidelines be posted to the website for public information.

11.c 2024.178 Approval of RFP for Gilbert Boucher Park Bath House

Motion to enter Committee of the Whole to discuss the bath house by Councilor Belanger.

Second by Councilor Beaupre.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Mayor Grohman suggested working with the Biddeford Pool Community to review options.

Recreation Director Thompson reported that the temporary restrooms which were rented last summer for \$15,000 had weekly issues. The public appreciated them, but it was a lot of extra work for recreation and public works staff.

Councilor Belanger suggested exploring options with the COT.

Councilor Lessard suggested putting the project back out to bid.

Director Fecteau suggested that staff perform the build in-house.

Discussion ensued.

City Manager Bennett recapped the four options to explore:

- 1) Preliminary dialog with representatives from Biddeford Pool (interest in design and financial participation)
- 2) COT interest and availability
- 3) Rebid in January 2025
- 4) In house discussion with staff

Motion to exit Committee of the Whole by Councilor Belanger.

Second by Councilor Lessard.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.d. 2024.179 Approval/Lease Purchase of New Rear Packer Waste Truck

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.

Second by Councilor Belanger.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11.e. 2024.180 Approval/School Department Career and Technical Education Equipment Bond

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.
Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote: Unanimous in favor.
Motion passed.

11.f. 2024.182 Blanket Letter of Approval of Games of Chance

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.
Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote: Unanimous in favor.
Motion passed.

11.g. 2024.183 Delete Part II Code of Ordinances, Chapter 42-Motor Vehicle and Traffic, Article I – In General, Sec. 42-8 Parking Authority

Motion by Councilor Beaupre.
Second by Councilor Belanger.
Vote: Unanimous in favor.
Motion passed.

11.h FEMA Update January 2024

Director Fecteau reported that the January storms of 2024 led to widespread infrastructure damage to seawalls and road damage. He noted that Biddeford is not going to qualify for any beach berm money from FEMA as there is no way to prove loss. With the help of Professor Will Kochtitsky and other resources, the intent is to capture what currently exists (pre survey) to compare to a post storm survey for future reimbursement. University of New England Assistant Professor Will Kochtitsky provided a brief update on his work with sea level rise and beach monitoring.

City Manager Bennett added that York County has a couple of efforts underway that may benefit Biddeford as well.

12. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen noted that Council passed a moratorium last month preventing the conversion of units into condominiums at Pepperell Mill and voiced concerns that the Portland Press Herald reported that the city reversed its decision in allowing those conversions to take place.

One citizen spoke in support of a Traffic Safety Committee.

One citizen spoke about bike safety.

Mayor Grohman contacted the Portland Press Herald requesting clarification of their article on the moratorium. The terms of agreement can be found on the website: [News Flash • City of Biddeford Announces Agreement for Tenant.](#)

13. City Manager Report

City Manager Jim Bennett spoke about the tax stabilization program and that the State legislature discontinued it this year.

City Manager Bennett spoke about the article in the Portland Press Herald and provided details of the recent six-month moratorium on condo conversions.

He also gave an update on the new sewer billing system. The conversion process is expected to be completed by April 1, 2025.

He reported that all video archives are available on the website by clicking on video /agendas / minutes; at the top of the page, there is a link “find our archives for meetings pre-June 2024.”

City Manager Bennett also described Assessing and the property adjustment process.

14. Other Business

Councilor Lessard has several properties in Biddeford with large tax increases as well.

Councilor Lessard requested an update to parking garage quarterly payments at next meeting.

Councilor Belanger noted that tonight’s meeting was moved from Tuesday due to the Election. He commended the City Clerk, City Staff and Volunteers for an amazing job and thanked everyone that participated.

Councilor Beaupre requested that review of the Downtown Committee and Traffic Committee be placed on the next agenda for discussion. Councilor Lessard supported this request.

15. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain congratulated the high school field hockey team and volleyball team for successful seasons in making the championship game and regional finals. He also congratulated the marching band for winning the New England championship game.

Council President LaFountain encouraged staff to investigate proactive, creative solutions for funding the Skate Park.

16. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman echoed the election day positive comments and included the efforts of the school, he noted that voter turnout was remarkable and wonderful.

Mayor Grohman reported that the Veterans Day Parade starts at 10:00 A.M. in Saco. The parade will proceed along Main Street and down York Hill into Biddeford. The parade concludes in Veterans Memorial Park (corner of Alfred and Pool Streets) and the Closing Ceremony will occur at the park around 10:45 A.M.

Mayor Grohman thanked Heart of Biddeford and Executive Director Delilah Poupore for hosting the Maine Downtown Conference today. There were approximately one hundred sixty

representatives from around the State. The event was well managed and was a great day for showing off Biddeford. Rhona Beauty was also the statewide award winner.

Mayor Grohman was pleased to report that the Recycling Center will be open two consecutive Sundays (November 17th and November 24th) from 7:00 A.M. until 4:45 P.M. for fall leaf cleanup.

17. Executive Session

This item was removed from the agenda.

18. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilor Beaupre.

Second by Councilor Belanger.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.