

City of Biddeford
City Council
January 7, 2025 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 - present
Councilor Beaupre - present
Councilor Gross - present via zoom
Councilor Belanger - present
Councilor Doughty - present

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adjustment(s) to Agenda

none

4. Recognition

4.a Fire Department Retirement Recognition:

Call Co. Division Chief Mike Gobeil.

After 35 years of service Call Company Division Chief Mike Gobeil retired from the Department effective December 11, 2024.

Fire Chief Best spoke about retiree Mike Gobeil

4.b Fire Department Promotion:

Lieutenant/Paramedic Robert Cousins

Lieutenant Cousins was sworn in and pinned.

5. Appointments

5.a 2025.01) - Approval Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Councilor Lessard asked about the new appointment form and asked that the pronoun question be reviewed.

Councilor Beaupre would like the appointee names read out loud before the vote.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

5.b 2025.05) - Approval Mayoral Council Appointments

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Whiting

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

6. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen commented on the structure of the 4-day work week at City Hall.

Another citizen commented about the pronouns on the applications.

One citizen was glad to see the new traffic committee formed.

7. Consideration of Minutes

7.a Council Minutes 12-17-24

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7.b Council Minutes 12-23-24

Motion: Councilor Whiting

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

8. Orders of the Day

8.a 2025.03) - Approval Winterfest Special Events permit

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Recreation Director Lisa Thompson spoke about the event, everything will be on Saturday, February 8th.

Vote: Unanimous in favor. Councilor Gross voted yea by zoom.

Motion passed.

8.b 2025.08) - Resolution Encouraging Reclassification to Advance Affordable Housing Opportunities

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Planning and Development Director George Gervais spoke about the resolution.

Nathan Bateman gave a presentation about the proposal at Forest Green.

Councilor Lessard asked about the formula to decide on the number of units.

Councilor Doughty asked about the scoring items.

Councilor Whiting motion to amend, after the 6th Whereas add “ *Whereas current floodplain data reflects this change is merited*”

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote on the amendment: Unanimous in favor.

Vote on the resolution as amended: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

8.c 2025.09) Approval Payment to Jim Godbout for Seeds of Hope project

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Whiting

Councilor Belanger asked about the funding sources.

City Manager Jim Bennett said they are still working on it and are trying to find ways to maximize the CDBG funds. He will have an update at the next meeting.

Vote: 8 yeas: Councilors Lessard, Ortiz, Belanger, Doughty, Whiting, Emhiser, LaFountain; and Councilor Gross yea via Zoom.

Councilor Beaupre recused himself.

Motion passed.

9. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen asked about the Seeds of Hope project bid process.

One citizen asked about previous agenda items.

Councilor Belanger – motion to suspend the rules to allow public comment on previous agenda items.

Second: Councilor Emhiser.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

One citizen spoke about the Winterfest sledding activity and the environmental impact of hauling and removing snow. They also spoke about the Resolution impact on Rotary Park. They also asked the Council to keep in mind environmental issues with future developments.

One citizen would like to have Council keep an eye on the incentives that might be requested for the Forest Green project in the future. They would also like the new Traffic Committee to review the project for opportunities with sidewalks, public transportation, bike paths, playgrounds and a skate park.

One citizen commented on the importance of green space and keeping Rotary Park for recreation.

One citizen requested that a pilot of a bike path be put in place by May.

10. City Manager Report

10.a 2025 Investment Portfolio Goals

City Manager Jim Bennett reviewed the investment goals with the Council. He also pointed out that more detailed investment information is available in the Finance meeting packet.

11. Other Business

Councilor Beaupre clarified statements from the public about the Seeds project. He requested that the city advertise events and Biddeford Beat type news in the Courier each week. He would like the city to have more staff recognition at Council meetings.

Councilor Belanger would like an update on the recent projects submitted to Maine State Housing. He would like the Planning Board to look at the Climate Action Plan and see where those items can be incorporated.

Councilor Lessard agreed with Councilor Beaupre on the local news, he has suggested this in the past.

12. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain mentioned the Clifford Park Covenants and hopes the Policy Committee will make progress on it at their next meeting.

13. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman reminded everyone of the Municipal Referendum Election on Tuesday, January 21st at Tiger Gym, 7:00 am to 8:00 pm.

There is an RFP out now for a playground item.

The public access channels continue to make progress.

He thanked Public Works Director Jeff Demers and his team for their work handling challenges with the recycling pick up during the holidays.

Councilor Emhiser and city staff will be meeting with the DEP on January 21st regarding city sewer plans.

14. Adjourn

Councilor Belanger motion to adjourn at 7:46 pm

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned.