



City of Biddeford
Citizens' Advisory Committee

April 22, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Planning Office & Teams

[Citizens' Advisory Committee](#) | [Meeting-Join](#) | [Microsoft Teams](#)

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes
 - 2.a Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 25, 2026
3. Discussion Items
 - 3.a Update—FY26 Resident and Provider Surveys
 - 3.b Update — FY26 Applications
 - 3.c Ward Meeting Notes
4. Other Business
5. Adjourn

03.25.26 CAC Meeting Minutes

1. Call of Order at 5:35 PM by Leah
 - a. Lost a member: Erin Partridge
 - b. Jess (committee member) did not attend
 - c. Leah, Terje, Jessica (staff member), David, Betsy (remote) in attendance.
 - d. We are now being recorded. Be warned. The owl didn't really work though, despite everyone's best efforts.
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. February 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion by Talia, second by David. Unanimous approval of the minutes.
3. DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - a. Councilor Ward Meetings
 - i. All of them have occurred now
 - ii. Danika has taken notes from all of them, Jessica will review them and share that feedback with us.
 - iii. The skate park haven't been coming up as much in the meetings as expected. But it's one of the only things to cater to teens outside.
 - iv. David's ward meeting was wonderful – and full of very informative for all that participated. The theme for feedback – very few people that have children, people that are very deeply involved in the city and city business. The people said to spend the money where it's needed, but didn't really narrow the issues down.
 - v. Necessary maintenance should be done during the normal course of city business and the people voted for the bond to get new things, like skate park.
 - vi. There aren't enough plans in place for long-term maintenance, and what to invest in when.
 - b. FY26 Resident and Provider Surveys
 - i. Early May – there will be updates on the rec bond survey from the city
 - ii. The questions they ask tie directly into the HUD action plan – relatively uniform
 - iii. We are taking paper copies to the library, clerk's office, GA's office
 - iv. There will be a QR code as well
 - v. Biddeford Beat, Heart of Biddo, and all city methods
 - vi. David will also take the QR code flyer to some downtown businesses
 - vii. Robin approached Betsy and offered at the amin street entrance to put some in the vestibule as well
 - viii. There will be some of the surveys on the planning and assessing offices, and council chambers
 - ix. The school department will get the survey to circulate as well
 - x. Sullivan street hub and Guy will circulate the surveys as well
 - xi. Jessica will email us the flyer when it's ready – Betsy is going to put it on the age friendly website as well

- xii. It will also be posted outside of council chambers before budget meetings too
- xiii. The post office has bulletin board as well, as well as Hannaford and Market basket
- xiv. Elements has a bulletin board that would be a good place to put the QR code.
- xv. The data is being collected through survey monkey for the QR codes – Jessica will add the paper copies at the end in the spreadsheet.
- xvi. Talia proposed that the results be published, but we also discussed publishing a summary of the categories of feedback. We want to protect anonymity as well. Leah volunteered to put this together.
- xvii. Timing:
 1. We have to have a first hearing before we put the plan together to offer people to provide feedback in-person.
 2. We could do the public hearing after the survey closes – most of us thought this made the most sense.
 3. Jessica will look at those dates in April.
 4. 3 weeks is typically the most effective response window, historically. If we distributed the survey next week, we would want the results to go forward at a regular council meeting, probably after April 22nd.
 5. Jessica will look at the May meetings and talk to Truc about the time to go to council as well. May 19th or June 2nd – we will probably do the first public hearing at the June meeting. Jessica will email us with those dates and times when finalized.
 6. Once we do the public hearing, the plan draft gets filled in with the projects and funding breakdown from the feedback. Then we can circulate that and give that public comment period. Then after second public hearing it can be submitted to HUD, ideally by end of June.
- xviii. We should give the kids an opportunity at the high school to give feedback as well, for the sake of community advocacy and involvement, etc. If we are getting feedback from minors, we should not public all of the specific responses received.
- xix. You do not have to be a Biddeford residents – it's live or work in Biddeford.
- c. Application scoring
 - i. This is the public services application. Jessica is ready to put out a notice of funding availability next week - we want people to start applying so we can make a recommendation on those applications.
 - ii. Last year nobody applied. But we are a bigger group this year and are going to try have a broader impact.
 - iii. We want to make the internal government apply for the funding as well. The city has to follow the same rules as everyone else. Jessica is working

on the rules for the program, record keeping, etc. That is what it is – those are regulations. If a group is going to apply, you have to sit through a technical assistance (TA) meeting with Jesscia to get the funding.

- iv. There's time to ask questions about the applications and then a deadline to complete.
- v. Jessica will put together a packet for us with the applications to review, as well as the scoring criteria, and time for a brief presentation to us by each group.
- vi. Are we considering a waitlist for people the have applied previous years that didn't make the finding cut the previous year.
- vii. Are we trying to find more smaller projects, or fewer bigger projects?
Depends on applications and funding.
- viii. We asked for David to keep an eye out for community service agencies that get cut from the city budget, so we can make sure they apply here if applicable as well.
- ix. Talia says morale is important.
- x. The scoring is a point system that has been used in the past.
- xi. The scoring gradebook needs to be published with the application so people understand what they are being scored on. We do the grading as a committee. Our recommendation then goes to council, and they have the final say.
- xii. There hasn't been criteria in the past like this, so CAC doesn't always get used the most effectively/ impactfully.
- xiii. If the money isn't spent, some of it rolls over, but there's timeliness warnings and workout plans if we don't spend in the right timeline. We are in a much better place now. No more money shuffling! Truc is helping us get things done the proper way now.
- xiv. All of the scoring sheets go into the action plan folder to show our documentation as well.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. We are going to try and reach out to some former CAC members to try and fill our spots. All applications welcome. Come join us! We are fun! Also need someone who wants to be secretary....
 - b. The city published agenda links are working for our meeting today.
5. ADJOURN – at 6:25 PM, by motion of Talia. Second by David. Unanimous.

Ward 5 Meeting – February 24, 2026 – about 10 participants?

- Look at how to pool funding together w/CDBG
- Shevenell Park – potential volunteers to invest, plans ready to go
- Balance of owning Community Center vs JFK

- Safety a high priority, longevity, things that can't be funded elsewhere, in-kind or other sources leverageable
- If we have \$8 million in deferred maintenance it's not time to build a skatepark
- Bathrooms
- Accessibility in general
- Beach on the river at Rotary Park deserves priority because of the demographic it serves and its accessibility to downtown
- Are there some needs that are immediate for safety, accessibility, security that we won't have that facility anymore
- Serves marginalized people
- Which has the most energy/community spirit/morale change that will happen if it goes through – ex. Skate park

- Desire for user statistics?
- Understand if priority of need is driving conversation more than public input
- Outreach to youth

- When we put a fence up, if it could be a fence that goes all the way to the ground and that small children can't run over

- Long-term maintenance plan to ensure this doesn't happen again and acknowledge lifespan

- There are places where it is stressful to be with little kids – Shevenell is one of them. Lighting upgrades is part of proposed plans and design elements are intended to make things “cozier” and more welcoming to everyone
- Game tables
- Spaces that get used invite positive use – does there need to be programming there? Free programming that is accessible to all facilitates connections across demographics. Spaces that are only used by one group are not public spaces.

- We need public restrooms but we need to acknowledge that it will attract people who don't have bathrooms.
- Ward 5 has an abundance of people in crisis because this is where the services are. There needs to be places for people to be.
- Are we thinking about who is in need and how these funds can be used to serve the needs? But does not negate desire for safety
- Mural on privacy screen at Community Center
- Desire for Our Biddeford to return
- Put up QR codes throughout the city for feedback (ex. Are the roads clear after the storm? Let us know!)
- Can we put a strip across the road at the entrance of Rotary Park to count vehicles
- Economic impact of non-Biddeford residents visiting our parks
- Skate park and other amenities can improve family-friendliness – property taxes

Ward 3 & 4 Meeting – February 26, 2026 – about 20 participants?

- Would like to see similar level of engagement for the Community Development Block Grant program
- Fan of Clifford Park, trail system can use better markers (brighter paint for green)
- Future skate park is incredibly important to the community, has had a lot of community engagement – epitome of democracy and mobilization, City should respond – doesn't think it should have a level 3 rating because the reason it isn't here is because regular maintenance wasn't conducted on it and it was condemned
- Biddeford Adult Education advocating for investment in the building – they have 5 classrooms and office spaces on the second floor. Historic building, on the bus line, connects with people that it serves. Parking lot, security, heating system upgrades would make a tremendous difference in getting more community members to take advantage of this space.

- Recreation Commission chairperson – number of families and households that would be impacted if Community Center building closes
- Biddeford 50+ Club – think this place is perfect for seniors – easy in and out with ramp and elevator. Have 50-70 seniors playing bingo here every week – in favor of investing in community center
- Question of if building ever been abated for lead and asbestos and if those costs are included in estimates for spending
- Woman who worked in Community Center building for 26 years has been dismayed by band-aid fixes and supports investment
- What is the choice that residents are being asked to make? We can fund all the items on the list that Rec prepared
- Member of initial group that got the skatepark built – said that city gave initial financing for skate park (maybe \$250K according to teacher involved in process) but required the group to come up with their own plan for the park – local skateboarder built all the initial ramps for it – did it at Rotary Park because that was where there was the most land
 - Can Clifford Park’s skatepark be expanded? Would it qualify for LWCF?
- Resident feels it takes a herculean effort to get building maintenance to go through at budget time because Councilors set an ideal tax rate increase and budget to that number even if it does not line up with the need
- What is happening with JFK?
- Supportive of a skate park due to the importance of alternatives to mainstream sport courts/fields and to keep kids out of trouble
- Recommendation for civic engagement ward meetings to walk people through how people can participate in local government
- Cub Care parent prioritizing Community Center repairs knowing the building’s importance

Ward 6 Meeting – March 2, 2026 – 15 Participants

- Resident concerned about turnpike entrance on South Street in Biddeford
- Resident feels that a skate park is dangerous unless there is someone there to supervise
- Concerned that we build or buy buildings and don’t keep up with maintenance – want longevity of investments

- Resident noted that independent groups that self-fund should be lower priorities for use of the bond funding; we would be paying a lot for things that other people use (Ice Arena)
- Is there room for some fees at West Brook Skating Rink to support it?
- Support for community center as a concept but concerns about possible move to JFK and whether we should invest in a building that could move
- Support things that a lot of people use (Mayfield and Clifford Park)
- West Brook needs to be fixed because they are losing water and that they should not charge to use it, has a long history
- Resident upset about lack of concrete numbers associated with expenditures, thinks that estimates are going to be significantly higher than listed such as Community Center
- Corner of Main and South Street has too many near misses; corner of May and South needs to be addressed
- President of Girl's Little League Softball advocating for their field and an ongoing project – rebuild retaining wall, redo dugouts for the girls – 125 kids in league, working to build a canteen with the support of the Council, Jim Godbout, etc. Hoping to bridge the gap of funding to help with this project
- BCHC - Community Center needs new roof and heating system – room has leaking roof and temperature differences on either side of room – building a new community center will have a bigger bill, let's take care of the building we have – serves so many user groups (immigrants, veterans, AA, older adults, kids) – fix the roof so that we don't have to fix the roof and ceilings later
- Comm Center is a beautiful building to be cared for
- Rule of thumb for rehab of old buildings is to double estimates, this would be \$4 million at community center instead of \$2 million
- Should take down JFK and build a simple one-story community center complex that is easy to maintain (flat parking, no elevators), near the schools and fields
- Community Center is used all year round but some of the facilities are used for a short period of time in the summer
- Tuesday evening men's volleyball participant at the community center – people come from all over the state to play the game. Wants a safe building that is a joy to be in. Has a 2-year-old and wants to see playgrounds, typically goes to Saco to play with his kid but does like the new Community Center playground.
- Chair of Dog Park – run completely by volunteers, no upgrades or money from the city in about 15 years despite funding requests, aren't able to raise enough funds to support it – park is very popular all year. Fencing needs serious improvement. Feels

like skate park didn't maintain their space to the extent that it created a safety concern and would be getting rewarded for it.

- Speed of drivers on Highland Street – temporary speed bumps?
- Concern about obvious drug activity in the Community Gardens
- To address busy intersections, we should do things to get cars off the street – support for bus routes
- Desire to upgrade the kitchen at the Teen Center – Community Gardens would like to host events and workshops
- West Brook Skating Rink is a jewel
- Skate Park listed as a #3 priority – number is pre-community form and changeable – it is not about the numbers it serves but who it serves and the down-the-road benefits of how it can change their lives
- Speed limits not adequately enforced on South Street
- Community Center has historic significance and whatever it takes to keep it going is worth doing. Too many buildings in Biddeford have been allowed to deteriorate and disappear
- Tennis wall at Mayfield is part of Biddeford history and shouldn't be removed; may have evolved back into use for pickleball
- How will you decide what to take off the list if something comes in higher than estimates?
- Not enough for teenagers to do for free in this community – skate park
- Older buildings are better buildings
- Should we prioritize one project and focus on it, then when that's done, move on to the next?
- Staff should go after more grants
- Corporate sponsorships; Rotarians – creative collaboration

Ward 1 Meeting Minutes

- Capital Management Process
 - i. Deferred Maintenance importance
 - ii. Additions- return on investment
 - Westbrook needs help with liability & permitting; awesome usage
 - Level out- help with drainage; one dam will ruin it
 - Used as field in summertime
- Ice Arena does not have family hours

- BCPC Newsletter
 - i. Boardwalk is too short- extends 30ft
 - ii. City cannot afford infrastructure currently
 - iii. Skate park (Ann Thompson)- nothing for kids
- Carcass on the beach
- Buildings are not ADA compliant- JRMCC
- Skatepark
- LWCF – MTP

Additional Items Discussed:

- *Vines Landing – who owns this?*
 - i. *City Owns; who maintains it?*
- *Neglect Middle Beach/no portable potties*
- *Need for marine emergency response system*