

City of Biddeford
City Council
March 4, 2025 at 6:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

1. Roll Call - all present

Council President LaFountain
Councilor Lessard
Councilor Ortiz
Councilor Emhiser
Councilor Whiting
Councilor Beaupre
Councilor Gross
Councilor Belanger
Councilor Doughty

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Adjustment(s) to Agenda

The Biddeford High School Varsity Girls Basketball Team was present to celebrate their winning season.

4. Appointments

4.a 2025.18 Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

4.b 2025.19 Mayoral Appointment to Committee-Councilor

Motion: Councilor Whiting

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Councilor Doughty has attended one meeting with the committee and looks forward to working with them.

5. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen spoke about national politics and the complexities of human genetics.

One citizen shared positive news about the Biddeford Bike Bus.

One citizen spoke about ideas and communications with the mayor.

6. Consideration of Minutes

6.a Council Minutes 2-18-25

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

7. Second Reading

7.a 2025.16 Approval Public Art Commission Ordinance

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

8. Orders of the Day

8.a 2025.20) Approval of George and Clifford Street Intersection Improvement.

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

8.b 2025.21) Approval/Amend Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2 Article IV, Division 16

Citizens' Advisory Committee

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor Lessard said that other city committees do not limit the members by specific demographics.

Councilor Belanger asked if this is required by HUD and if there would be any impact on funding.

Jessica Wilson, Community Development & Grants Manager, explained that it is a preference, not a requirement and there would be no impact.

Several councilors pointed out other committees that request certain demographics or experience for committee members.

Councilor Lessard – motion to amend Chapter 2, Article IV Boards, Committees, Commissions, Division 16 Citizens' Advisory Committee, Establishment – delete paragraph two.

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: 2 yeas – Councilors Lessard and Beaupre.

7 nays – Councilors Ortiz, Belanger, Gross, Doughty, Whiting, Emhiser and LaFountain.

Amendment failed.

Councilor Emhiser – motion to amend Chapter 2, Article IV Boards, Committees, Commissions, Division 16 Citizens' Advisory Committee, Establishment, second paragraph, delete “with particular emphasis on” and replace with “including”

Second: Councilor Doughty

Vote on the amendment: 7 yeas, Councilors Lessard, Belanger, Gross, Doughty, Whiting, Beaupre and Emhiser.

2 nays – Councilors Ortiz and LaFountain.

Amendment passed.

Vote on the order as amended: unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

8.c 2025.22) Approval/Amend Code of Ordinances, Chapter 74, Article II, Division 5,

Shellfish Conservation Ordinance

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Lessard

Councilor Belanger commented that the changes are recommended by the State and that they passed unanimously at the most recent Policy Committee meeting.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen spoke about search and seizure issues and road repairs.

One citizen requested that the council pass a resolution in support of Governor Mills and the State of Maine.

10. City Manager Report

Acting City Manager Brian Phinney gave an update on the audits for FY23, FY24 and FY25. He also gave an update on a HUD grant and IRS payments.

The Recreation Department extended the deadline for summer program scholarships.

The General Assistance Department did a great job on the recent state audit.

Manager Phinney and Superintendent Ray are exploring private plan options to meet the Maine FMLA requirements.

11. Other Business

Councilor Whiting expressed his gratitude to the Fire Department and community for their response to his recent property fire.

Councilor Lessard reminded everyone of the importance and challenges of the upcoming budget process.

12. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain shared the news that the Courier and other area weekly papers will be stopping their print production later this month. There will need to be a plan to reach the community for events and notices.

13. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman thanked Manager Phinney for his updates and expressed his confidence that we will solve the problems.

There will be a K-12 art show at the Biddeford Middle School tomorrow from 4-7 pm. He will select a few pieces of art to exhibit at City Hall.

The Mayor will be touring the Biddeford Housing Authority properties with Director Gagnon tomorrow at 2 pm.

There will be a grand opening ribbon cutting for 5 Corners Laundry, tomorrow at 4 pm.

There will be recognition of Vietnam Veterans on March 29th at Memorial Park.

14. Executive Session

14.a Executive Session MRS 405 (6) a Personnel Matters and MRS 405 (6) e Legal Matters

Motion to enter executive sessions at 7:22 pm by Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed

Motion to exit executive sessions at 8:15 pm by Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Order 2025.23

Pursuant to the Charter of the City of Biddeford, Article IV City Manager, Section 1, Brian Phinney shall immediately serve as Acting City Manager for an indeterminate period.

Motion: Councilor LaFountain

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

15. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:16 pm by Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned.