

City of Biddeford

City Council

March 18, 2025 at 6:00 PM

City Hall Council Chambers & Zoom

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

None

4. Public Hearing

4.a Pepper's Mexican Restaurant LLC Liquor License

Open Public Hearing at 6:10 pm.

Public Comments: none

Close Public Hearing at 6:11 pm.

5. Liquor License Consideration

5.a Pepper's Mexican Restaurant LLC

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

6. Proclamation

6.a Vietnam War Remembrance Day

Mayor Grohman read the proclamation.

6.b Eid al Fitr

Mayor Grohman read the proclamation.

7. Presentation

7.a School Budget Presentation by Superintendent Ray

Superintendent Ray reviewed the budget and slides.

7.b City Budget Presentation by Acting City Manager Brian Phinney

Manager Phinney provided a preliminary budget review.

8. Appointments

8.a 2025.27 Mayoral Appointments to Citizen Committees

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Belanger

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

9. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen spoke about the budget.

One citizen thanked Mayor Grohman for setting up the affordable housing workshop and the online comments forum.

10. Consideration of Minutes

10.a Council Minutes 3-4-25

Motion: Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

11. Second Reading

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

Motion: Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Lessard

Police Chief JoAnne Fisk spoke about questions from the first reading. The overgrown bushes will be addressed. Public Works Director Jeff Demers agreed with that plan.

Councilor Ortiz asked questions about the slope and safety of the location.

Councilor Beaupre spoke about the benefit to public safety all year.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

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

Citizens' Advisory Committee

Motion: Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Beaupre

Vote: 8 yeas - Councilors Ortiz, Belanger, Gross, Doughty, Beaupre, Whiting, Emhiser and LaFountain.

1 nay – Councilor Lessard.

Motion passed.

*11.c 2025.22) Approval/Amend Code of Ordinances, Chapter 74, Article II, Division 5,
Shellfish Conservation Ordinance*

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

12. Orders of the Day

12.a 2025.24) Approval / Reconstruction Gil Boucher Park Bath House

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Whiting

One citizen commented on the alternate pricing of the proposal.

Public Works Director Demers reminded everyone of the new sewer line and updates to the vault.

Recreation Director Lisa Thompson reviewed the bids, timeline, project location and funding. The proposed bid meets the needs for both public and staff use. They are not asking for the alternate items but included them for Council to review.

Councilor Lessard – motion to Table this item until the next meeting.

Second: Councilor Ortiz

Vote: 5 yeas, Councilors Lessard, Belanger, Gross, LaFountain and Beaupre

4 nays, Councilors Ortiz, Doughty, Emhiser and Whiting.

Motion to Table passed.

*12.b 2025.25) Approval / Engagement Agreement Extension for Berry Dunn - FY24 Audit
Work*

Motion: Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor LaFountain

Manager Phinney explained the recommendation.

Several councilors expressed concern about the funding but also that it needs to get done.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

12.c 2025.04) Approval / River Wall Repair Project at Riverwalk Overlook (FEMA)

Motion: Councilor Beaupre

Second: Councilor Lessard

Code Enforcement Officer Roby Fecteau explained the elements of the two options for the project, funding and timing.

Councilor Lessard expressed appreciation for the CEO and Public Works Director for their efforts to put the best project together and save the city money.

Councilor Belanger expressed concern with the last portion of the funding source, he would like to approve the majority of the funds but hold off until the final source can be verified.

Councilor Belanger – motion to reduce the total cost by \$400,000.

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote on the amendment: Unanimous in favor.

Councilor Emhiser asked about the VRAP concerns with the project; Manager Phinney explained the rules when disturbing the soil near the wall.

Vote on the order as amended: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

12.d 2025.28 Approval PFML Private Plan Substitute

Motion: Councilor Emhiser

Second: Councilor Belanger

Human Resources Director Diana DePaolo explained the program and answered questions about opting back in to the State plan if needed in the future.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

12.e 2025.29 Approval Treasurer Appointment

Motion: Councilor Belanger

Second: Councilor Lessard

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

13. Public Addressing the Council

One citizen asked about the progress of the Comprehensive Plan and the impact on future development.

14. City Manager Report

Acting City Manager Brian Phinney gave an update on the FY23 audit and a vacancy in the assessing department.

15. Other Business

None

16. Council President Addressing the Council

Council President LaFountain did not address the Council at this time.

17. Mayor Addressing the Council

Mayor Grohman has received a parking report and will share it with the Council tomorrow.

Councilor Belanger – motion to extend the Council meeting past 9:00 pm.

Second: Councilor Emhiser

Vote: 6 yeas – Councilors Lessard, Belanger, Gross, Doughty, Whiting and Emhiser.

3 nays – Councilors Ortiz, LaFountain and Beaupre.

Motion passed.

18. Executive Session

18.a Executive Session MRS 405 (6) c Real Estate Matters

Councilor Belanger motion to enter executive session at 8:59 pm.

Second: Councilor Whiting

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

Councilor Lessard - motion to come out of executive session at 9:48 pm.

Second: Councilor Ortiz

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion passed.

19. Adjourn

Councilor Lessard motion to adjourn at 9:48 pm

Second: Councilor Ortiz

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Meeting adjourned.