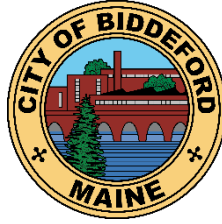

CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE

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PRESS RELEASE

City of Biddeford Announces Employee and Volunteer of the Year Awards

BIDDEFORD (September 26, 2022) — The City of Biddeford has recognized a set of exceptional employees and volunteers who performed above and beyond expectations in 2022 at their annual Employee and Volunteer Banquet.

Amber St. Ours was named the City of Biddeford's 2022 Employee of the Year. St. Ours started her career with the City of Biddeford in 2005 in the City Clerk's office. Her friendly disposition with customers and ability to learn new tasks quickly helped her thrive in the department. In 2015, she took on the role of Deputy Tax Collector and assumed additional duties as Office Manager for the Clerk's office shortly after.



Mayor Casavant, left, and City Manager James Bennett, right, present the City of Biddeford's Employee of the Year Award to Amber St. Ours, Deputy Tax Collector/Deputy City Clerk.

“Amber’s dedication to always doing things right and keeping the Clerk’s Office on the right track is immeasurable. She is fiercely loyal, unassumingly kind and an absolute pleasure to work with,” said City Clerk Carmen Bernier. “She has gained the respect of her co-workers and her warm demeanor is esteemed by all those who interact with her. I could not be more proud of Amber and I honestly feel that there is nobody more deserving of this award than her!”

“Amber is known to go above and beyond for her colleagues in and out of the City Clerk’s office and for the residents of Biddeford with kindness and enthusiasm,” said City Manager James Bennett. “I am very grateful to have her on our team and to present her with the Employee of the Year Award for 2022.”

Several other awards were presented to employees at the ceremony, including the Management Team Member of the Year Award, the Technical & Service Team Members of the Year Awards, and the Customer Service Team Member of the Year Award.

Craig Chekan, the City Engineer, received this year’s Management Team Member Award. Chekan joined the

Engineering Department in 2021 as the Deputy Engineer and stepped into the role of City Engineer in July.

“Craig is one of the friendliest people I have been given the opportunity to work with and always arrives with a smile on his face and a friendly greeting for coworkers,” said Jeff Demers, Public Works Director. “He is an outstanding employee and a huge asset to our Engineering department, and is so deserving of this award and recognition.”

This year, two employees were presented a Technical & Service Team Member Award. Jon Koestner has served as the Wastewater Mechanic at the Wastewater Treatment Plant since 2010. Over his years with the Department, Koestner has exceeded his primary job duties and learned how to perform nearly every task necessary to keep wastewater operations running smoothly.

“Jon checks on the facility remotely from home on a regular basis and frequently will stop by the plant on the weekends to make sure everything is still running okay, even when he is not the person that is on call,” said Alex Buechner, Wastewater Superintendent. “Whatever needs to get done, Jon gets it done, and his positive attitude plays a major role in how well the employees work together.”

Adam Hubbard, the Police Department’s Domestic Violence Investigator, also received the Technical & Service Team Member Award this year. Hubbard has been a member of the Police Department since 2017. In addition to his investigative duties, Hubbard also serves as a recruiter and Internship Coordinator for the Department, as well as the backup Evidence Technician.

“Adam is a team player who is always willing to take on new projects and make himself available to assist others in the Department,” said Police Chief Roger Beaupre. “His ambitious workload requires someone to be proactive, productive, passionate about their duties, and work independently to excel, and he has done just that.”

The Customer Service Award was presented to Nan Whitten, the Planning and Development Department’s Office Manager, who has worked for the City for two years. Whitten plays a key role in organizing and operating meetings for many of the City’s Committees, Boards and Commissions, often requiring her to work well past regular business hours. She is known by her colleagues for stepping up to assist others in her department and being thoughtful about work processes and procedures.

“Nan is the kind of person that people are drawn to. She has a deep interest in her work and the work of other departments,” said Greg Mitchell, Director of Planning and Development. “In many ways, she is the glue that holds the department together.”

The City’s Volunteer of the Year award is also presented each year at the Employee and Volunteer Banquet. This year’s award was presented to Rick Laverriere. Laverriere served five terms on the City Council between 2005 and 2017 and was a previous Council President. He currently serves on the Fire Advisory Committee and is the Chair of the Airport Commission.

“Rick has a giving personality and is very easy to work with because of his sense of humor,” Mayor Casavant said. “He simply does what he has to do in order to get things done, never cutting corners. While he serves on two committees already, if I was in a pinch, he would assist.”

Laverriere has gone beyond the call of duty in serving on the Fire Commission, driving the Fire Department’s “Rehab Bus”. The Rehab bus travels to the scenes of incidents to provide short-term shelter for displaced individuals. The bus has water and snacks for occupants and firefighters and serves as a warming or cooling shelter.



Mayor Casavant and City Manager James Bennett present Rick Laverriere with the Volunteer of the Year award.

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